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Can Education Help Immigrant Students Gain Capital?

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Elizabeth Capparelli entitled "Can Education Help Immigrant Students Gain Capital?." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Education.

Allison Daniel Anders, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Robert Kronick, Barbara Thayer-Bacon

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Can Education Help Immigrant Students Gain Capital?

A Thesis Presented for
the Master of Education
Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Elizabeth Capparelli

May 2013

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all the fantastic children I have had the privilege of working with, and those I will have the privilege of working with in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and love of many people. I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis chair Dr. Allison Anders, who was incredibly helpful and offered invaluable assistance, support and guidance. Deepest gratitude are also due to the members of my committee, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon and Dr. Robert Kronick. I would also like to express my love and gratitude to my beloved family and friends; for their understanding and endless love throughout this long process.

ABSTRACT

A review of current literature and research written from the voices of immigrant students was conducted. An emphasis was placed on how immigrant students navigate through the school system as represented through their particular voices and experiences. Research came from ethnographies and research articles that were written from the perspectives and voices of immigrant students. The review helped to answer questions regarding what were some of the challenges immigrant students faced as they navigated through the public educational system. Also, were there similarities or differences in the challenges faced by immigrant students that came from different countries and different racial climates? The immigrant students' articulated challenges and factors faced were then analyzed using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social capital, along with the work of Tara Yosso and her complications of Bourdieu's theories. Lastly, implications were drawn from the work that could aid school personnel with immigrant students. Suggestions were given for teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and policy makers on how this research can be used in the future to help immigrant students succeed in our public educational system.

Key Words: Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital, social capital, immigrant students

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

“Capparelli! I need you in the office.” I hear the school secretary come over our two-way radios one morning in late spring. Off to the main office I head to find out what is going on. The secretary hands me the phone and quickly explains that there is a new Mexican family trying to enroll at Van Allen School (pseudonym) (a school whose English as a Second Language (ESL) students are bused to us) and asks if I could please give directions in Spanish to the parents over the phone. I first talk to the secretary at Van Allen School who communicates to me what is going on. Then she asks if I could please talk to the mother to explain why the family needs to come to our school to enroll even though they are in the Van Allen School zone.

Over the phone, I speak with the mother regarding why she has to come to a different school to enroll her daughters and tell her how to get to our school. Once the family arrives at our school, I along with the sister-in-law help the mother fill out the necessary paperwork to enroll her daughters. While we are filling out the various documents needed to enroll her two daughters – a first grader and a third grader – the ESL teacher was taking the daughters one at a time to test them to see if they qualified for ESL services. The ESL teacher came back after testing them individually to let me know that the third grader tested out of ESL and that the first grader was at the high end but did in fact qualify services. The teacher was not sure what to do, as the test results might mean the two daughters would be split – the third grader going to Van Allen School and the first grader bused to our school. To complicate the matter further, there was a pre-

kindergarten son who would be starting school next year, and there was a chance that Van Allen School would qualify for its own ESL teacher the following school year.

I asked the teacher to please talk to her supervisor to see what needed to occur before we talked to the mother. I did not want to further confuse her after all she had been through that day. Luckily, the ESL teacher, and the principal agreed with me and so we told the mother we were waiting on a phone call and would call her with the rest of the information about enrollment and on how her children would be getting to school each morning.

This recent incident along with many others has given me the passion to work with immigrant students along with their families and has sparked my passion for helping immigrant students navigate through our public educational system in the United States. For several years I have worked with immigrant students who have come through the Molasses County school system (MCS) and have seen their struggles as they try to navigate through the system. These struggles, along with some of the success stories I have observed have intrigued me and motivated me to want to learn more about immigrant students' experiences. I have been interested particularly in their perspectives and voices. I have been both fascinated and amazed by these students who come into MCS from the various countries. For example, I have watched as some immigrant students come into the schools and become some of the top students in the class, while other students seem to end up being tracked into the bottom part of the class. Regardless of where they fall in class rankings, I have found that it is still impressive to see just how much each and every one of the immigrant students I have come to know learns and

acquires academically and socially as they adjust to often a brand new culture and a brand new way of learning.

The foreign born population in both the United States and Tennessee has increased quite notably from 1990 to 2000 as measured by the U.S. Census. Foreign-born persons in the U.S. increased from 19.8 million in 1990 to 35.7 million in 2005 (80% increase). In Tennessee alone, the number of foreign-born persons went from 59,114 in 1990 to 223,118 (277 % increase) in 2005 (Mattson, 2007, p.1). With population increases such as those that we are seeing in our foreign-born persons, attention needs to be placed on this population. Recent data shows that in public school classrooms 1 in 5 students are immigrants (Goodwin, 2002).

In Molasses County School system, statistics have been kept for students who receive ESL services, but not for the number of immigrants in the school system. Students have been identified by their race, but there is no distinction between, for example, recent immigrants and second- and third-generation students in each race. In the last five years from (2007 to 2011), Molasses County increased its numbers of students who are considered not yet to be proficient in English, which went from 1,173 (2.1 % of all students) to 1,757 (3.1 % of all students). While it may seem that in the large picture, three percent is a small number, it is still a big enough number for the school system to feel an impact from these numbers. It also important to note that MCS is just citing the number of students who are not English proficient and not all of the students who may qualify as immigrant students.

I have heard teachers express doubt over why educators need to spend so much time listening to the specific voices of our ESL children when purportedly practices (i.e.

ESL pull out classes) are already in place to help these students. While there are many practices in place to ‘benefit’ these students, I argue these practices were created and then left to stand for years without any revisions or modifications and fail to address the increasing numbers of immigrant students in the U.S. public classrooms. Secondly, I argue that the students are the ones most affected by these practices and more often than not are not ever asked about their transitions and experiences in public schools. I believe that through listening to these students and hearing their voices and opinions, we can help all of these students have the tools to succeed in our educational system. It is the voices of the ESL students that should contribute to policy development, so that everyday procedures aid immigrant students in their navigation of the U.S. public schools.

As I have watched children from all different countries come into our school system, several questions have come to mind. These questions drive where this thesis will go. In this thesis some of the questions I want to answer from immigrant students’ perspectives are: What are some of the challenges immigrant students face as they navigate through schools? Are there similarities identified among immigrant students from the various countries? Or do the immigrant students all have different struggles? Is there a difference between immigrants from the various countries in how they view the school system? And lastly, what is the relationship if any among the students’ articulated challenges and perspectives and Pierre Bourdieu’s (1992; 2007) theory of cultural capital?

To answer these questions, I present in chapter two a review of the literature and research regarding how immigrant students navigate through the school system as represented through their voices and experiences. I will be reviewing three ethnographies:

Made in America: Immigrant Students in our Public Schools by Laurie Olsen (1997), *Up Against Whiteness* by Stacey Lee (2005), and *Subtractive Schooling U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring* by Angela Valenzuela (1999). Also, I will be reviewing several articles that were written predominantly from the voices of immigrant students. In chapter three, I will review Bourdieu's theory (1992; 2007) on cultural and social capital, as well as complicate his theories with the work of Tara Yosso (2005). Subsequently, I will analyze factors I found across the various research studies. As I analyze these factors I will use both Bourdieu's as well as Yosso's work to look at how they are affecting the immigrant students. Finally, in chapter four I will conclude with my thoughts on what I have found in the research along with my thoughts on the applicability of Bourdieu's and Yosso's work. Additionally, along with some thoughts on what has been found, I will give some suggestions on what needs to happen in the future to help immigrant students.

As for the conclusion to the story with which I started this chapter about the Mexican family with the two little girls and the possibility they would be separated and sent to two different schools, I can say that this particular incident did end well. The ESL supervisor decided to send both of these girls together to Van Allen School for a variety of reasons. There were several reasons for this decision: the first grader was very close to exempting out of ESL services; there were less than three months left in school; and there was a huge possibility that there would be an ESL teacher at Van Allen School the following year. I cannot express how relieved I felt that I could call the mother to tell her that both of her children would remain together, and that they would be attending a school that was within walking distance of their apartment. While this experience ended well, I know that there are many more that do not end well for the students.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH REVIEW

In this chapter I will review research that included and privileged immigrant student perspectives and voices in work on immigration and public education in the United States. Ena Lee (2008) argued that classroom discourses can (re) create subordinate student identities in her study entitled “The ‘other(ing)’ costs of ESL.” This was a one-year study she had conducted of a Canadian post-secondary English as a Second Language (ESL) program, which analyzed the “interconnections between language and culture through a critical dialogical approach.” (p. 91) Between March 2003 and March 2004, Lee spent her time at a major Canadian University (Pacific University) collecting data through document analysis, questionnaires, student focus groups, interviews, staff meeting observations, and classroom observations. Lee had a total of 87 student participants who were between 20-25 years of age and ranged from less than two year to ten years of “formal” ESL education. Students in her study came from a number of different countries, but close to 60% of the students came from Mainland China. Lee was interested in discovering whether or not students thought their professors’ beliefs and their approaches in the classroom were commensurable with the “student’s own perceived ESL needs and goals and whether their observations of classroom practices were commensurate with their understanding of the larger program pedagogy.” (p. 94-95)

Lee’s research works to highlight the voices of the Pacific University’s students as they struggled to navigate the “other(ing)” costs of English language education both within and outside of the classroom. Lee found that even though the University’s program was unique in that the program’s pedagogy was influence by critical theory and cultural studies, students still experienced racializing and essentializing discourses in the

ESL program. Through her research, Lee is able to bring attention to “discourses of othering in the ESL classroom in general and how the power and subversiveness of such discourses allow them to persist even within a program activity attempting to reconceptualize the teaching of English for agency” (p.103). This highlighted by Toring, a student from Mainland China, who commented:

Last semester, a lot of semesters, some teacher give us, like, cartoons and he said, ‘China has no human right.’ And the last semester, some instructors read a part about the Tiananmen Square and say some students can’t tell the truth because the government will be kill them. And when we talk with the instructor about these things, they show, they find *another* articles or essays written by the western people to give us. I think it’s a kind of prejudice. (p.101)

Lee found that even when students tried to present an alternative voice, instructors appeared to strengthen their resolve to reassert their own perspectives.

Berlin Lawrence (2002) produced themes from interviews which he discussed in his article entitled “Effective ESL instruction: common themes from the voices of students”, where during the summer and fall of 1999 he conducted interviews with students at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Lawrence conducted 15-20 minute interviews with 47 undergraduate students ranging from all 7 levels of the intensive English program. Interviews conducted during the summer were more general and open ended, from which he developed themes through the analysis of repetition of words and ideas, which helped to develop a more structured interview protocol for the fall interviews.

Lawrence found that the most common response on how to best learn a language had to do with speaking, but other ways mentioned were through reading, writing, and traveling to a country where the language is spoken. Another common theme he analyzed from interviews was the students’ need for language teachers to make connections to the

real world. English was seen as a tool that allowed them to connect with the external world in which they were studying, working, and living. Also, students noted that for teachers to be classified as effective, they had to fulfill multiple functions. Teachers needed to simultaneously meet their students' expectations regarding their personal and professional interactions, make connections to the external world, and find a balance within the classroom between their multiple teacher roles relative to the individual students' needs. Some of the descriptive adjectives students used to describe "good" teachers were terms such as, "'active,' 'challenging,' 'clear,' 'encouraging,' 'energetic,' 'passionate,' and 'patient'" (p.13). A couple of quotes from students showing these terms follow:

He always is – what is the word – energetic all the time.

His teaching is clear. I studied same subject before, but I couldn't understand about that. But he teaches that again so I can understand.

Patient. More patient. Because maybe you can explain something it's easy, but it's difficult for a student. (p. 13)

Along with numerous comments on what makes a good teacher, the student-participants comments overlapped and formed non-casual links between "humor", "love", and "learning". One student illustrated these links with his comment.

I think if you have a tough teacher maybe you'll hate his class. But if it's funny, you will love the class. You will try to show the teacher and the rest of his class you are considerate of his class. (p.12)

Students felt that humor helped them focus in the class and stay interested, which in turn makes them love the language. When they love the language, they are more engaged in the class causing them to study more, which helps "facilitate, expedite, and enhance their learning of the language" (p. 12). This research will hopefully help to make more

effective teachers by reminding them to adjust their praxis to accommodate the changing needs of students inside their classrooms.

James Cohen (2012) explored the perspectives of three adolescent Mexican English language learners concerning their high school English as a Second Language (ESL) experiences in an urban city in the southwestern part of the United States in his article entitled “Imaginary community of the mainstream classroom: Adolescent immigrants’ perspectives.” Cohen wanted to demonstrate how the three students either did or did not invest their identities into the ‘imagined communities’ of the mainstream program. Cohen conducted his study at Aranda High School where 97% of the student body was Latino, with approximately 30% of whom were enrolled in the ESL program. Data for this qualitative study were collected via 75 hours of observations focusing on student actions and interactions with the teacher. Also, Cohen had daily informal conversations and formal semi-structured interviews with each of the three students, as well as two formal 90-minute semi-structured interviews with the teacher.

Cohen chose three participants from a survey he conducted of 254 ELs, where he was looking for an immigrant born in Mexico, had more than five years in U.S. Schools and could speak enough English so interviews could be conducted in English. All three of the participants were women who had been born in Mexico and had spent the first 6 to 11 years of life in Mexico, then moving to the United States. From the interviews, he produced two major themes from the data: (1). The ESL classroom did provide a comfortable learning environment, but had little cognitively challenging material. (2). The ESL class/program did not meet the students’ expectations for future careers. All three of the women felt that the ESL program was not providing all that the mainstream

program could provide them, even though all three of them had only taken one mainstream class (either P.E. or an elective). The students place blame on the “ESL program and the ESL classrooms for holding them back from experiencing what a ‘regular’ education could be” (p.276). Considering these students were not involved in mainstream education, other than classes such as physical education, their thoughts on ‘regular’ education were very interesting.

In Laurie Olsen’s (1997) ethnographic work *Made in America: Immigrant Students in our Public Schools*, she represents how life is for immigrant students in a prototypical public high school in California, which she names “Madison High.” Twenty percent of the students in the high school were born in another country and more than one third speak limited English. Olsen spent two and half years at this high school during 1990-1993, where she spoke and watched students and teachers, as well as spent time interacting with community surrounding the schools. In her two years, she interviewed fifteen faculty members and administrators, and conducted in-dept interviews with forty-seven students. From those faculty and students, she selected ten female students and five teachers to focus on in-depth. In the end, she created comprehensive biographies of the following nationalities: an Afghan immigrant, a Brazilian immigrant, a Latina (Mexican American) born in the United States, a Fijian immigrant, an East Indian immigrant, a Vietnamese immigrant, a white student born in the local Bayview community, and African American student born in the United States, a Chinese immigrant, and a Mexican immigrant. The teachers included four white teachers, and one Latina administrator. Even though, Olsen spends time interviewing teachers and administrators, for this thesis I am going to emphasize predominately findings from the students, as was explained in

chapter one. Through these ten in depth students, she was able to study the social circles of the school through observations and hangout time with these girls. The central issues Olsen explored were:

- How did they [students] understand “America”? What does it mean to be American?
- What borders and boundaries did they create or detect in social relations? What language did they use to articulate and create these borders and boundaries?
- How were the crossing, the borderlands and terrain in between languages, cultures, and national identities experienced, shared, and contested?
- How did they experience and view their encounters with each other across languages, cultures, and national identities?
- What was it like for those students and teachers who felt themselves involved in forging new terrains of language, culture, racial, and national identity?
- Why were they in school, and how did they experience school? What relationships did school have to the rest of their lives? (1997, p.20)

These questions/themes really reflected the organization of her research. She started the book with a history of how the school came to be the way it was in the early nineties. Specifically, she addressed the change in the community as well as the closing of nearby Washington High School, which enrolled predominately Latino students, who were now bussed to Madison starting with the 1990-1991 school year. In 1993, there was no longer an ethnic majority at Madison High School. After a clearly defined history of Madison High, Olsen represented her findings from her time spent there. Olsen along with a history teacher designed a homework task for both “sheltered” history and “regular” history classes in hopes to better understand how the school was classified in the eyes of the students. The ‘sheltered’ class was for limited English proficient immigrant students, where the ‘regular’ history class was for English proficient students. The task was for the students to draw a map of how Madison High students arranged themselves socially through where the groups hung out and who was included in the groups. What Olsen

found was that the newcomers designed their maps in terms of national and language identities, whereas the ‘Americans’ drew their maps in terms of racial categories. For the newcomers, they described students in terms of the language they spoke and their activities. Following are some examples:

There is a category of Chinese students by the cafeteria – Chinese girls who speak Mandarin who like to go to UC Berkley.

Vietnamese people who speak Vietnamese sit near the cafeteria. Those who only speak English hang out between A Hall and C Hall.

There are two categories of Mexicans. The Mexican Mexicans who speak Spanish hang out near the tennis courts. The Mexican Americans who speak English and don’t want anything to do with the Mexican Mexicans hang out in C Hall. (Olsen, 1997, p. 41)

The ‘American’ students struggled with a world full of racial meaning and full of divisions, so they included labeling and judging of each other using terms such as: “wannabees,” “white-washed,” “knowing who you are” or “forgetting who you are.” (p. 39).

The newcomers described the journey they perceived they needed to make to become “American” about which they talk at length on. Some of the more common things they talked about needing to overcome to become “American” were learning the English language and wearing the “right” clothes. One student talked about making the wrong choices in these areas led to ridicule.

I have learned that all students in this school divide into many groups. Mexicans with Mexicans. Vietnamese with Vietnamese. Americans with Americans. And the American students don’t like the immigrant ones and usually laugh at our dresses and sports and language. (p. 47)

Another student spoke about how clothing was a central theme in her experience of becoming American.

Americans always change their clothes. It is the first thing they say about immigrants coming in this country like we are in dirty clothes. They say, 'oooh look at her clothes.' When I first came they made fun of us. That's why clothes are so important to me. Sometimes it is all they think about. A person is their clothes in America. (p. 46)

When it came to using key descriptors to mark various social groups, clothing was a huge one for the 'newcomers.' As newcomers first arrived to Madison, they found that one way that they felt they stood out from other students was from wearing their cultural clothes. Gloria, a newly arrived student from Mexico, wore a beautiful serape on her first day of school. She describes how she immediately felt something was wrong.

It was a beautiful serape that my uncle had given to me when I left home. It is woven green and brown and is very soft and warm. I was excited on my first day that I could wear it to school. But it did not feel beautiful when I got there. It felt wrong. (p. 45)

Through wearing clothes that were different from "Americans" they felt that just being in America, did not make them American. Along with feeling different, the students remarked that by wearing clothes that were American, meant that you would start acting American and sending American signals – meaning for many immigrant girls could then be courted by American boys. Sandra, an immigrant from Brazil, felt that standards of dress in the United States are not freeing, but rather are more restrictive.

I used to dress different, and people were treating me different because of how I dress and making fun of me. In Brazil, we wore short skirts and we liked to walk with our hips. Here girls dress like boys in long pants and shirts. If a girl puts on a dress they just talk about her legs. To me, that is the way girls are supposed to dress – to wear skirts and to swing your hips. Now I dress and walk like an American. My mom asks me, "You don't like dressing like that, do you?" And I say, no I don't but I have to because the other way they're going to make fun of me. (p. 47)

"Making fun" of her turns out was calling her terms such as "slut" and "whore." The issue of dress and becoming Americanized often brought with it turmoil, because while

they often wanted to fit in, they also wanted to maintain parts of their culture and not become too Americanized leading to not fitting in with their own nationalities. One Vietnamese boy talked about the struggle of having two cultures.

People ask me, why can't you be both Vietnamese and American? It just doesn't work, because you run into too many contradictions. After a while you realize you can't be both, because you start crossing yourself and contradicting yourself and then it's like math, when two things contradict each other they cancel each other out and then you are nothing. You are stuck as nothing if you try to be both. So I chose to be Vietnamese. I'm not sure I really could have been American anyway. (p. 54)

For the immigrant girls, discovering an acceptable standard of dress is one of the most obvious requirements along with the need to speak English, but one of the other things the girls commented on was music. The newcomers often equated the different nationalities with the music to which they listened. A general perception the immigrant students had of American teens is that they like to have fun, not take things too seriously, and be carefree.

Most Americans like free time to get in their different groups and have fun. They always want to have fun. When I go to the library at lunch I never saw many American people there, except some. They go outside and have fun. I always see most immigrant people in the library because they sit and study there. They want to do good in school, and they don't have fun outside the library. But Americans want to have fun. (Olsen, 1997, p. 48-49)

The newcomers felt that having fun for American teens was much more important than anything else, sometimes to the exclusion of acting like school was important. Most immigrant students shared a belief that school is important to their future, and so tried to do well in school.

One of the newcomer's biggest fears was that they would be laughed at. Laughter often comes as a sign to them that they have made a mistake or have done something that is not acceptable. One student remarked:

The way we speak English is why the native people laugh at [us]. Another thing they laugh at is immigrants' and newcomers' clothes because they usually wear their own country clothes. Some laugh at them in physical education because they think that immigrant people don't know how to play games. I walk around school and see what kind of things people do, like how American people act and how they treat immigrants. I have seen sometimes American people say bad words and make fun of immigrants, and some of the things happen to me, too. I see what happens to newcomers at Madison if they won't have any English. Immigrant people feel bad when American students say bad things to them or make fun of them. In my physical education class, there was that Indian boy who had a big culture hat and American people were [making] fun of him. He couldn't take it anymore and [took] it [off] and cut his hair – and he don't even think about his culture in front of American people. I feel so very sad about this. American people always embarrassed us in front of everybody. Some of the meanings I take from these findings are prejudice is how we are treated. (p. 51)

Often the laughter comes from “American” peers and makes the newcomers feel excluded. Along with the fear of laughter, some of the words that came up time and again in written statements from immigrant students about their adjustment time at Madison were “sad”, “nervous”, “afraid”, “alone”, and “confused” (p. 52). These words came alongside recurring themes of racism and discrimination, specifically the hurt feelings that often accompanied discrimination occurred from peers from their own countries.

Immigrant students from a history class created flip chart pages regarding the differences in why they migrated to the United States with the reasons that “American” think they migrated. Some of the reasons why they actually migrated were “to find work”; “wages were too low in home country”, “to have a better future”, “to get a better education”, to “escape war”, and for “political freedom.” Some of the reasons they think Americans think they are here were “to take over”, “to be American”, to take American jobs, to “bring diseases”, and they are “nerds.” (Olsen, 1997, p.57)

Communication

Of all the many endeavors and aspects of immigrant life, the aspect that receives the most attention and generates political focus and controversy lies in the matter of language. Learning English has become an essential requirement for acceptance and participation in a mainstream curriculum along with the English-dominant social world. Immigrants along with teachers and native U.S. born students agree that to be American, one must speak English. (Olsen, 1997, p. 90-92) Several of the immigrant students commented that learning English was a very overwhelming experience and often the major issue in their lives. ESL students at Madison high actually begin their ESL experience in the lower-level ESL classes taught at the Newcomer School, which is across the street from Madison. Once the students have achieved intermediate levels of English fluency they transfer to higher-level ESL classes taught on site at Madison High.

Olsen (1997) noticed that the transition the students make as they come to the United States is often a difficult and painful time from the embarrassment and rejection they feel due to not being fluent English speakers. Samiya, a tenth grader, explained:

If I want to fit in the American way I have to talk like American people in English all the time. If I talk Dari ever, they make fun of me. But they make fun even when I talk English. I learn to shut up. (p. 95)

Immigrant students need to learn English not only to avoid mockery but also to be able to fully understand what is happening around them and to be able to be an active participant. A young woman from Mexico talked about the struggle she experienced.

I felt very bad at Madison. Everyone was talking in class and their English was better than mine and they had friends. I also was surprised because students [were] rude to their teachers, which didn't happen in my country. Sometimes they were very rude but the teacher didn't do anything. I wished I could go back to my country. I thought my teachers and other students where were so lucky because they could talk their native language at school. They don't know how it feels when one lives in a strange country. You can't understand anything and you can't say anything. (p. 95-96)

Students feel a 'sense of loss' from their first day for their not being able to understand their surrounding (p. 96). As the students start to learn the language, they also want to learn the behavior of U.S. born students along with learning to make sounds that do not give them away as foreigners. Even when students are considered fluent in English by academic standards they frequently still find it difficult to master the slang of their U.S. peers. Learning English therefore comes in two steps, with step one being learning a basic vocabulary and rudiments of English. Step two becomes finding American teenage friends who will communicate so English is used in context and who will teach them slang. Mandy spoke of her wish to find an American friend:

Sometimes we tried to talk to them to learn more English, some of them helped us, and some of them just laughed and made fun of us. Sometimes, most when you have an American friend talk to you and be friendly and be nice to you, you feel really happy. But most, when you walk on any street or walk through a group of American students, you hear them say something or they pick on you or they throw something at you, and they do it because they think you don't understand English and speak English. They think we don't understand their message because we can't understand the words they use. We understand. They tell us by how they act that they don't want us. (Olsen, 1997, p. 97)

Learning English for some immigrants serves dual purposes in that not only does it serve to not make them feel so lonely, but it also will serve as capital if and when they return to their homeland. Unfortunately though, Olsen noticed that what tended to occur is that as they started to learn English, they put little to no value on continuing to develop their native tongues. She observed that what was happening was immigrant students appeared to be aware of the fact that they are 'standing between two languages' and responded to this by transitioning to English and 'leaving behind their mother tongue.' (p.99)

Social Life

Apart from the language, another huge issue especially for young immigrant women is regarding issues of relationships and the differences in cultures. Dating is viewed very differently amongst the various cultures, and as the young women students start wanting to date problems arise at home with parents. One immigrant girl tried to describe why it is that girls choose to “play around” and then lie to their parents.

The girls are playing around now because it is their only chance. Here in America, we hear about love all the time and we all want it. We see TV. And wish that was our life. So some girls play around. And then they have to lie to cover it up. They can't let their parents down by admitting what they are doing. But that's not me, and I tell my parents that I would never act American that way. But they are afraid. They are afraid maybe they don't know me anymore. Maybe I am like those other immigrant girls. Still I understand the girls that do it. We are left out because we choose to honor our parents. We don't get to be part of the fun. (Olsen, 1997, p.127)

Some of the students were either sent back to their native country or sent to live with family in other parts of the country. Olsen's chapter on love and marriage for the young immigrant women was written more based off of the observations she made of how the women sat apart and their reactions to issues of dating, but there was also several valuable quotes of how these women viewed the differences between their culture and the culture of American teens. Following are two examples of comments made by the immigrant girls on dating:

There are two ways. To be American, it is okay to lie to parents, it is okay to wear American clothes, it is okay to have argument where you never would before, and it is okay to be with your boyfriend. To be Fijian, you follow your family ways.

My parents are very Filipino, like strict. You know what I'm talking about? They're just typical Filipinos about the boys I hang around with. Like I can't have a boyfriend until I finish college. And my dad sometimes doesn't like the ways I'm dressed. Life if it's a low top, he'll say, come back in here and get dressed. I mean, I can't go out with my friends unless they really know that person. They're really strict... We always argue because, see, I have a boyfriend, so it makes it worse – and he is Latin, so that makes it really worse. My dad had a fit and said they think my education is more important and they are afraid I'll run off with my

boyfriend. I explain to them that it's not like that, but they don't believe me. So now they think I'm not seeing him, but I am. We all lie. We just have to. (p. 126-127)

Along with differences in how dating is viewed, for many of the young immigrant women, especially those that are the eldest, working to be a financial support for their family is a big issue. The eldest child in a family often has to make sacrifices when it comes to schooling, as they have to work to bring in income for the family. Pani, an Afghan immigrant, is the oldest child in her family and her parents expect her to help the family out. She explains:

My parents need me to work at the cleaners where my mother also works. I go three days a week after school. I also try to do my schoolwork. But my brother and sister do not work – just me. I am the oldest. We want them to be able to just study and not have to work. As the oldest, I do both. (Olsen, 1997, p. 128)

Olsen observed that “a fair number of them come to accept within a few short years in the United States that those futures will be perhaps for their younger siblings or their children” (p. 129).

Religious Life

Religion and some of the customs associated with religion also come into play for these students as they navigate through the school. One such example is for students who celebrate the Ramadan and therefore don't eat and maybe weak during classes such as P.E. The students felt that they were singled out for their beliefs by teachers and administrators and with a small amount of language skills, they have a hard time explaining why it is that they aren't eating. Olsen has managed to bring about some of these issues through the voices of the young immigrant students.

Olsen (1997) ended her book with how the story really ends. We were not just readers of this story, but rather we could help to add the conclusion to this story.

The conclusion will be written as people join in resisting efforts to track us to different futures based on our skin colors, as we together break the silence about the damage being done by excluding and ill-serving students whose home language is not English and whose national backgrounds are from beyond our own borders. And in our collective action and voice is the hope for a new more democratic, just, and inclusive multicultural America. (Olsen, 1997, p. 253)

This quote urges all of to take part in this conclusion. If we all work together in education, and in the greater American society, we can achieve a more inclusive multicultural America.

In Stacy Lee's (2005) ethnographic work *Up Against Whiteness: Race, School, and Immigrant Youth*, she studied the way a group of first- and second-generation Southeast Asian Americans create their identities as "new Americans," (p. 1) with an emphasis on the Hmong American high school students. She argued that the process of identity formation is a complex one for immigrant youth who must navigate through the various competing messages about identity. She stated that, "the Hmong American students in my study must negotiate cultural differences within a social context of unequal power relations" (p.1). It is through navigating the school system as well as their experiences at school, that these students gain much of their knowledge of America and being American. Lee cites that many of the ethnographies done of immigrant students are regarding low-income immigrants of color who attend poorly funded schools with equally poor reputations (e.g. Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). As such, she decided to conduct her ethnography at a school that has been well funded and has had a reputation for academic excellence. The district in which this school was located within was named by several national magazines as being one of the best in the nation. Though many of the students are at a "good" school, many of the Hmong immigrant students fall through the

cracks. Their experiences stand in contrast to the majority of the student body and were often unseen and many of their needs unmet.

Lee (2005) wrote that the first Hmong arrived in the United States with refugee status from Laos over 25 years ago. The Hmong were originally an ethnic group from China but have lived in Laos since the 18th century where they are still considered ethnic outsiders even in Laos. In Laos the Hmong mainly made their livings as slash-and-burn farmers in the remote mountain regions, but during the Vietnam War Hmong soldiers served as U.S. allies in the “secret war” (p. 12) against communism in Laos. The Vietnam War brought tremendous casualties to the Hmong people, where the many of the remaining Hmong fled to Thailand to resettle.

As the office of Refugee Resettlement assigned resettlement locations to Hmong in the U.S., federal policy encouraged dispersion, so as to “minimize the burden on a single state and in order to encourage assimilation.” (p.12) However amongst the Hmong, the importance of extended families is important and so dispersion caused significant secondary migration. Moreover, secondary migration produced concentrated Southeast Asian communities especially in the states of California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Even with a population of nearly 200,000 Hmong, many people in the U.S. remain unaware of who the Hmong are or why they are in the U.S. Lee speculated that this maybe because of being U.S. allies in a secret war and also in part due to the silence surrounding the Hmong in the public school curricula. According to Lee, many scholars have tried to characterize the Hmong culture to be described as “rural, preliterate, patriarchal, clannish, and traditional” (Lee, 2005, p.13) and in many ways untouched by time. Lee, however, argued that this culture has always been responsive to social

conditions dating back to time in China, as well as their time in Laos; the U.S. was no exception. Through decades of adversity, they have managed to transform their culture and she made the case that they will adapt to life in the United States and would continue to survive as a distinct ethnic group.

Lee conducted a one and a-half year ethnographic research project amongst Hmong American students at a public school she calls University Heights High School (UHS) where she collected her data. Her used participant observation of the Hmong American students, semi-structured interviews with the Hmong students and school personal, as well as examination of school documents to produce her research. UHS is located in a city she named Lakeview. Lakeview was considered a socially and politically liberal city. The Lakeview school district has been named one of the finest in the country by various national magazines, and UHS has in particular prided itself on academic excellence. In 1985 the U.S. Department of Education awarded the “School of Excellence Award” to UHS. UHS was located in a predominately White, middle- to upper-middle-class residential neighborhood and drew students from surrounding neighborhoods of middle- and upper-middle-class residents. UHS also drew from the south side of the city, where lower-income housing was available. Most of the Hmong students lived in the south side of the city.

Due to the fact that the school grouped all Asian students in one population (totaling 29% of the student body in the 1999-2000 academic year), the exact number of Hmong students was not known, but estimates made by various staff concluded that there were approximately 65 Hmong students enrolled at UHS during the 1999-2000 school year when Lee conducted her research. Most of these students came from lower-income

families and received free or reduced-priced lunch. Most of the students were born in the United States too. Therefore, the students were part of a second generation and most were mainstreamed and not included in the English as a Second Language Department (ESL) of the school. A few of the Hmong American students though were part of a 1.5 generation who had only been in the United States for three to eight years and were enrolled in the school's ESL program.

Hmong students entered a school that was a public school "with a history and continuing commitment to serving the children of the educated elite of the city" (Lee, 2005, p.23). According to Lee (2005), at UHS whiteness was what defined what was considered normal, desirable, and good at the school. The faculty of UHS was almost entirely white and played a role in the reproduction of the culture of UHS. The majority of highest-achieving students were White or East Asian Americans coming from middle-class families. It was these students that the faculty praised as students that made this high school like a small university setting.

Just as students were referred to as "good," parents also were reflected in class positions as being "good" parents. Often the Hmong parents did not fall under this classification, by teachers and administrators, in part because Hmong parents rarely initiate contact with the school. Normally, the only time Hmong parents came into the school was when a teacher or administrator directly requested their presence. The Hmong American students reported that the reason for this was often due to their parents' uncomfortable feelings around limited English skills as well as their limited understanding of the school system. Lee learned that even though UHS staff assumed that Hmong parents were not involved with their children's education, in fact this was not the

case and it was not what the Hmong American students were reporting. The Hmong parents' manner of involvement was either unseen or unappreciated by the UHS staff. "One [Hmong] student explained, 'Hmong parents tell you to go to school. Don't skip. Do your homework when you come home. Go to the library, if possible. Get a book and check it out and read'" (p.36-37). This quote shows that the parents did value education and wanted their children to succeed in the educational system.

Many Hmong students reported that problems in school were due to the most common sources of intergenerational conflict. Several students reported that their parents were very involved in their children's educations and in particular viewed truancy as a problem. Pang, a senior in 1999, told Lee that his father and mother always encouraged him to do well in school, but that they could not help him with academic work due to their few experiences with formal education. Pang felt that he was at a disadvantage, as he explained because his parents could not help him with academic work, the way "American" parents could (p. 37).

Another issue that Lee found was that staff often advanced a "cultural deficit perspective" (p.46) in regards to the Hmong students. They believed these students were falling into negative patterns due to living in poverty. What began to occur was that some of the non-Hmong students began to characterize Hmong American students as culturally deficient as well. Rita, a South Asian American student explained that many non-Asians are stereotyped in negative ways.

Like the stereotypes that people have are like a lot of the Hmong—the Hmong stereotype is that they're all gangsters and they follow, like, the "black path" of wearing baggy clothes and being cool and forming gangs and not coming to school, and being truant, you know, all the time. (p.47)

When conversing with other non-Hmong students, Lee found that Hmong students were often described as having “ghetto style” or “gang style” (p.48). When UHS staff and students describe Hmong American students in terms of cultural deficiency, Lee argued, they were in turn engaging in ideological blackening of Hmong American students. On the flip side of this were Asian American students who did well academically and participated in extra-curricular activities. In contrast, they were described as “‘Americanized’ (i.e., like the White middle class) and were being ideologically whitened” (p.48). Through cultural deficiency also comes cultural difference, which serves to preserve the normative nature of whiteness and maintains racial hierarchy. Lee believed Hmong students internalized this message that Whites were the only “real” Americans, so they described themselves as Americanized rather than Americans.

According to Lee (2005), adults in the Hmong community saw their youth divided into two groups: “traditional” and “Americanized.” The traditional youth were defined as the youth who have preserved their culture and are therefore the “good” kids. The Americanized youth were those that have “lost their culture” and therefore had turned into “bad” kids (p.50). Staff at UHS were in opposition to Hmong parents, in that Hmong parents felt that when youth lost their traditional ways they were much more at risk for gang activity. Hmong adults wanted their children to do well in school and gain economic success in mainstream society, but they also wanted them to keep their Hmong culture and identity. What Lee represented was that staff also divided the Hmong students into two groups – the newcomers and the Americanized youth. The newcomers were those who came to the United States as children and often received ESL services; these students worked hard in school and wanted to obey parents – and often were also seen as

the traditional youth. The Americanized were ones born in the United States, had become more Americanized, and tended to challenge their parents more. Lee found that the two groups rarely interacted with each other. One self-defined traditional student compared the two groups, “We are more traditional. We speak Hmong and know the Hmong culture. The others speak more English – they want to be cool. They don’t follow what adults say” (Lee, 2005, p.54). The Americanized youth were even more intent on highlighting the differences between themselves and the traditional youth. Americanized youth often used derogatory terms such as “FOB” (i.e. Fresh off the Boat) to describe the traditional students. One Americanized student stated, “FOBs don’t care about clothes. They are stingy about clothes. They dress in out-of-date 1980s-style clothes. American-born Hmong are into clothes and cars” (p.54).

One of the issues the traditional students who were in ESL classes faced at UHS was social isolation. Traditional students primarily socialized with other students in the ESL program. In the cafeteria, traditional students sat at tables in the vicinity of students who appeared to be either loners or students from the special education program. With this in mind, the only complaint traditional Hmong American students consistently stated about UHS concerns the social environment of the school and the isolation of ESL students. Traditional students expressed their want to get to know “American” (White) students, but “American” students appeared to be uninterested in getting to know them.

Aside from social isolation, traditional students also faced family obligations that could interfere with their educational pursuits. For example, Jackson, a senior at UHS, is the only driver in his family and is therefore responsible for driving his parents and siblings to their appointments. Sometimes, Jackson misses classes because his parents or

siblings have a doctor's appointment during school hours. Even with the feelings of social isolation and family obligations, traditional students generally have a hopeful attitude that they will succeed here in the United States. In contrast, second-generation students are more cynical about life in the US due to ongoing experiences with poverty and racism. Several of the second-generation students noted that White people were the ones that would most likely stereotype them as welfare recipients and gangsters thereby positioning them with African Americans in the racial hierarchy.

Hmong American students are aware of how interactions with Whites go. Sia, a graduate of the class of 1999, describes her interactions with Whites:

For me, I feel, I just feel like some White people neglect me. I mean as much as I try to be nice to them, give them respect, they don't give it back to me. Why should I even bother with them? Because I feel like I really don't need people like that.... I mean, if you're not Asian like me, you don't understand where I'm coming from either. Like White people, I mean, they say they do, but I don't see it. They don't really know how it feels. (p.68)

Sia and her friends have concluded that they cannot trust White people. Sia's distrust of White people extends to her distrust of White teachers. Traditional students assumed that the social distance between themselves and Whites come from language differences, Americanized students point to issues of race and culture. The traditional students tended to respond to racism by redirecting their focus to the positive aspects of life in the United States, while Americanized students were no longer able to overlook the instances of racism and discrimination. Americanized youth recognized that both Hmong Americans and African Americans were beneath Whites in the social hierarchy of UHS. Their understanding of position of African Americans in the racial hierarchy informed their responses to African Americans. For example, Sia commented that when African Americans failed to treat her with respect it does not bother her as much as when Whites

mistreated her. She explained, “I don’t let that disturb me. Because I can easily prove them wrong, you know.” She continued, “White people are successful,” (p.69) implying African Americans were not more successful than Hmong students.

Like many traditional youth, many Americanized youth also struggled with issues related to poverty. Americanized students’ many experiences with poverty had left them relatively defeated. Toua Vang, for example, observed resentfully, “All Hmong people are poor and live in shabby houses” (Lee, 2005, p.71). Americanized Hmong youth came to feel that money is the most important thing in the United States. Jim Her, a second-generation Hmong youth who has struggled in school, commented that “money is the most important thing in America,” and “You can get most things with money” (p.72). Many of the second-generation youth spoke about the importance of school in that school led to a good job and therefore money; however, their actions often contradicted their professed beliefs in the importance of education in that they reported not spending much time studying and a growing number were regularly truant. Lee found through her research, that the resistance Americanized students expressed towards school is often due to their negative experiences in school and therefore question whether education was the best way for them to achieve economic mobility. “G” for instance should be a senior in high school, but had only earned enough credits to be a sophomore. “G” explained that her part-time job was more important than school because with her earned money she could buy clothes and travel to Hmong soccer tournaments in various cities. In 2000, “G” dropped out of high school in order to work full-time, but stated she hoped to earn her GED suggesting she had not rejected education just her school experience (p.75).

Some of the reasons that Americanized/second-generation students faced difficulties in school were that they were struggling to master academic English-language skills. Many second-generation Hmong youth at UHS spoke fluent English, but struggled with reading and writing. Due to the fact that they spoke English fluently, many teachers did not recognize the fact that they were struggling with academic language skills. The students could often hide their problems until they were failing exams and grades were dropping, at which point many of them gave up and started skipping classes.

Lee (2005) noticed, that most of the Americanized students found themselves in mainstream classes where they were compared to upper-middle-class White students who were advantaged by the schools' culture of whiteness. These 'White' students grew up taking music lessons, attending theater camps, visiting museums, and participating in activities that give them cultural capital valued by UHS. Unfortunately, for the Hmong students, the things they learned at home and in their communities were not valued by the school and therefore, they lack cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992) valued by UHS.

Lee found that along with race and class, the Hmong experiences are also gendered. "Gender, as it intersects with race and class, informs and limits the experiences of Hmong American youth in their homes, communities, schools, and the larger society" (p.87). Hmong young women often complained about gender inequality in their families and in the Hmong culture. Jean, an Americanized girl, captured the feelings of many Hmong girls, "The Hmong culture believes that women are supposed to be this and that. I don't believe in that. If you're the woman, you have to do all this stuff. It's like giving you a job. And you don't even want to do it. It's like already setting your life for you." Hmong young men, however, never reported any concerns about gender inequality.

Hmong boys appeared to view men's and women's works as separate but equal, as seen in Danny's quote, "Both the guys and the girls have to do things. The guys do the outside work, and the girls do the inside work. Like, the guys have to take out the trash." Lee documented that in short, Hmong American youth at UHS are negotiating various new ways of expressing and performing their gendered identities in response to the multiple, complex, and often contradictory messages about gender they receive at home, school, and in the larger U.S. society.

Angela Valenzuela's (1999) ethnographic work *Subtractive Schooling, U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring* dealt with immigrant Mexican and Mexican American students at Juan Seguin High School in Houston, Texas and their experiences. Valenzuela draws the reader into her research with the statement often given by students about school personal, "Nobody cares," and she goes on to state that for the immigrant students this often is the case. According to Valenzuela, adults at the school either don't care or cannot care sufficiently to meet the needs of these students. Valenzuela conducted her study by doing a modified ethnographic approach where she analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data on Mexican immigrant students in the fall of 1999. Her key mode of data collection came from participant observation, and was supplemented by field notes and informal interviews conducted with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Through her informal interviews with both individual students along with groups of students, she noticed the importance of human relations to students' motivation to achieve. It was through these interviews that she repeatedly heard the words such as "care," "caring," and "caring for" that commanded her attention (p.7).

It was in her early qualitative data collection that she also took notice of how youth group themselves and the kinds of activities that they partake in these various groups. From these initial realizations, Valenzuela decided to look into students' 'affiliational needs' in their school context as well as their student grouping behaviors (p.8). She began the quantitative component of her student with a survey of Sequin's entire student body (N=2,281) in November of 1992. Valenzuela combined her quantitative evidence with her role as a participant-observer, which helped to generate her overarching conceptual frame for this study and theorized the idea of "care" in schools.

Valenzuela gave a history of Seguin High School in that it was built in 1936 as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration program. For the first thirty years of its existence, Seguin reflected the white, middle-class character of its more immediate community. By the 1990s student population were predominately Latino (95%) comprising of mainly Mexicans with a small population of Salvadorans. In contrast, African Americans comprise 3% and Whites comprise 2% of the student body. The faculty though is disproportionately White. In the 1994-95 school year, Latino teachers made of 19% of the teaching force, White teachers are 52 percent of the teachers.

On October 20, 1989 on third of the entire student enrollment of 2,939 students walked out of class. On the Tuesday before, student leaders moved quickly to announce the planned walkout through a combination of word-of-mouth and fliers. At 8:45 on the morning of the walkout, leaders opened classroom doors and shouted "WALKOUT!" into the rooms. The students then poured into the school's front lawn. The principal

ordered campus lockdown locking building doors and for participating students to be arrested. This, however, did not occur, due to the presence of tipped-off television crews and news organizations. One of the student leaders happened to be the son of a city councilman, and who made the following statement to the local press:

It's a shame we had to go to such extremes to get them to listen to us... You really can't blame everything on her [the new school principal]. Every year I've been there, it takes two to three weeks to get scheduling done for everyone. That has been going on for years. (*Houston Chronicle*, October 23, 1989)(p.53)

The demands the students made when they walked out were they asked for more bilingual counselors, computerized schedules, and more books and resources, including computers. The students also asked for dropout prevention and retention programs, and expansion of their honors, magnet, and special education programs, and equal funding across all district schools.

Many of the students and community members that Valenzuela interviewed felt that the October 1989 walkout was inevitable. One student remarked:

The walkout was about caring. We cared for our education though the teachers and administration didn't care for us. Even if they said they cared, talk is cheap. If it wasn't their fault the school was in such trouble – and they'll tell you that, clean their hand – it was their responsibility no matter what. *Todos, toditos* [All, all], they were all to blame. (p.60)

The walkout combined with parent and community pressure, brought about some immediate action from the district. The district held public meetings, and appointed a task force comprised of students, parents, teachers, and civic leaders to address the concerns brought out by the walkout. The district superintendent quickly replaced Sequin's principal, and appointed a school counselor to deal exclusively with the problem of students leaving school, as well as added three more bilingual teachers to handle the needs of the bilingual students.

Valenzuela realized during her time at Seguin, that there were competing definitions of caring from the teachers and students. Teachers expected students to demonstrate caring about schooling with “an abstract, or *aesthetic* commitment to ideas or practices that purportedly lead to achievement” (p.61). From the viewpoint of the adults, the way the students dress, talk, and generally compose themselves “proved” (p.61) that they did not care about school. In opposition to this view of caring, immigrants and U.S.-born youth were committed to “an *authentic* form of caring that emphasizes relations of reciprocity between teachers and students” (p.61). The students had a vision of education that parallels the Mexican concept of ‘educación,’ which was that they prefer a model of schooling that was contingent on respectful, caring relations. This idea of caring comes up throughout Valenzuela’s book, when students commented on either why they appeared to not care or how they felt that their teachers were not caring.

Seguin’s student’s definition of caring as mentioned earlier was much more aligned with the meaning of educación. Teachers demanded caring about school from their students in the absence of a relationship, whereas students viewed caring, “or reciprocal relations”, as the basis for all learning (p.79). Valenzuela noticed that many students often did not participate in classroom discussions when teachers asked them to. When she asked a ninth-grade student named Susana, why she thought that was, Susana commented, “You kinda’ have to seem like you don’t care because if you say something, and it comes out sounding stupid, then everybody will say you’re dumb. And even the teacher will think you’re dumb. And even the teacher will think you’re dumb, when they didn’t think that before” (p.71). Valenzuela’s discussion with Susanna further showed

that this was a generalized response to school based on several negative experiences with teachers in her past. Susanna stated in some detail of a particular experience:

One this bad science teacher asked me in front of everybody to stop raising my hand so much in class. And all the students laughed at me. I was trying to learn and he was a new teacher...hard to understand. I felt so stupid...so yeah, that and other things...Teachers say that they want to talk to you, but I notice that they really don't. I used to get mad about it, but now it's like "What's the use?" Not gonna change nuthin'. If I can just make it through the day without no problems...So now if something bad happens, I know that I didn't cause it cuz I'm just here mindin' my business. (p.72)

When Valenzuela shared this conversation with the teacher in whose class she was not responding, the teacher expressed frustration, annoyance, and grief over the thought that she had to deal with the consequences of a previous teachers' mistakes and insensitivities. This example shows a particular case in which both student and teacher are resisting a caring relationship.

Through many of Valenzuela's interviews with both immigrants as well as US-born students, she found that immigrant students often had a more positive view of education. Valenzuela attributed this to a dual frame of reference for education. Mexican immigrants' dual frame allowed them to evaluate their circumstances in the United States through the lens of their prior schooling experiences in Mexico. Many of the immigrant students Valenzuela interviewed had a very favorable attitude towards their schooling in Mexico as well as the entire educational system in Mexico. She felt that through her discussions she had with Sequin's immigrant students suggests the possibility that Mexican public schools, at least in the urban centers, might do a better job than U.S. inner-city schools in regards to educating Mexican youth. One student, Joaquin, stated he believed schools in Mexico were better especially beyond the elementary level. He noted that Mexico does not have the problems with drugs or gangs that exist in U.S. schools.

“In Mexico, it’s a privilege to be able to attend middle and high school” (p.119). Other students talked about how teachers were different in Mexico, that in Mexico the teachers promoted the idea that the classroom was a family and that all had the responsibility for others’ well being. Per the immigrant students, they could expect one to two visits annually from teachers. They felt that teachers in Mexico were much more invested in their students, than the teachers they had experienced here in the United States. With this dual frame of reference, came much comparison of their experiences with teachers both at Seguin and in Mexico. One student commented, “I know that the teachers are frustrated, but for even one teacher not to teach us, that’s not right. In Mexico, teachers get paid way less than I would make here sweeping the floor. To be a teacher in Mexico, you have to love teaching” (p.132).

Across Valenzuela’s sample of eleven gender-mixed groups, she found that females exhibit a clear pattern of offering academic-related support to their male friends and boyfriends. This support ranges from giving advice on courses to providing assistance on written assignments and exams. She noticed this pattern being evident cross-generationally, but never found it to be the case in an opposite situation where a male takes responsibility for a female’s schoolwork. The girls interviewed gave various reasons for why they were doing the schoolwork of their boyfriends – some of the reasons given were they boyfriend worked long hours and didn’t have time to do their own homework.

Valenzuela also found immigrant females seemed to receive harsher punishment from their parents when they did something against their parents’ wishes. One student remarked, “Our parents are extremely strict” (p.193). The immigrant females felt that

their U.S. – born counterparts were able to have much more freedom than they experienced. One immigrant female explained their position on freedom they felt the U.S. – born females had:

The freedom we want is not just to have sex, but to be able to express ourselves in a loving relationship. There are some Americanized girls, Chicanas, and even some Mexican girls, who just want to have sex and that's it! However, Rosario and I believe that the majority want to express themselves with love within a sexual relationship with their boyfriends. (p.196)

While this particular conversation referred to sex, the primary observation made by these young women was that the relative freedom enjoyed by their Americanized U.S. – born counterparts should not be considered an objectionable aspect of the American culture.

Between the immigrants and the U.S. – born Mexicans, Valenzuela documented that language became a mode of contention. Valenzuela found that language played a role in the identity of these students. The ability to not only speak Spanish, but to speak it well was of importance to the immigrant students. Spanish fluency and a Mexican identity seem to be one and the same in the eyes of the immigrant students. For those students who were second-generation Mexican Americans, they honored being Mexican even though they did not speak Spanish fluently. Second-generation students were left vulnerable to labeling and painful forms of teasing as they were considered “americanizada” due to their inability to speak Spanish. Language then became another issue to that separated the immigrants from the U.S. – born Mexicans.

Robert Teranishi (2002) wrote an article entitled “Asian Pacific Americans and critical race theory: An examination of school racial climate. His objective for the study was to address some of the common misperceptions of the American Pacific American's (APA) educational experiences by examining how students from different APA ethnic

subgroups are stereotyped and stigmatized at school due to their race and ethnicity. Some of Teranishi's focuses were to examine the factors that contribute to the success of students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, as well as to assess and describe the impact of the institutional context on the educational experiences and outcomes of APA students from different ethnic and immigration backgrounds.

Teranishi collected data for this study from interviews conducted with Filipino and Chinese students at four California public high schools. His study included 80 Chinese American and 80 Filipino American male and female students in their senior year of high school. His interviews consisted of short survey and in-depth, open-ended interviews designed to examine college decision-making processes and resources. Teranishi found that there were differences in the aspirations of Chinese and Filipino students. Almost all of the Chinese American students responded they aspired to graduate from a four-year college or university and many talked of long-term goals such as advanced degrees. In contrast, the Filipino students had a much wider range of institutional and degree aspirations. The Filipino students' aspirations ranged from proprietary vocational schools in auto mechanics, computers, or the arts to public universities. One-third of the Filipino respondents indicated they would only pursue "some college" (p.148). Teranishi also found that a rather large number of Filipino students were not sure what they were going to do post high school, some were even not sure they would graduate from high school.

Teranishi found that students from both ethnic groups described "overt and covert forms of racial stereotypes that they experienced at school" (p.148). Chinese students reported they felt that teachers and counselors treated them as a model minority, which

placed high academic expectations on them. With this treatment came tracking into college preparatory academic programs, which gave them access to teachers and resources that supported their academic, and counseling needs. Filipino students reported experiencing a lot of negative stereotypes from teachers and counselors at the school; many of them felt that they were viewed as delinquents and failures. One student remarked, “There is a stereotype that people have here that all Filipinos are in gangs. Just because I’m bald, I fit the stereotype of being a typical Filipino” (p.150). Another student explained:

If anything happens at school, automatically they think it’s our fault. At this school, they think all of the trouble-makers are Asians, Filipinos. I guess they look at the students differently, you know what I’m staying? The Asians are just little hoodlums or something. (p.150)

Teranishi’s findings have implications for educational policy and practice. He argued that educational policies in all sectors of the educational spectrum needed to acknowledge that APA students do not necessarily have the same educational experiences and outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE: CAPITAL

Bourdieu's Theory

January 2002 marked the death of perhaps one of the most prominent sociologist in the world, Frenchman, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu became an essential reference point for in various different “specialty” areas including education, culture, and the sociology of knowledge. He achieved canonical status in cultural anthropology as a result of his fieldwork conducted during the Algerian War (1958-1962) with the Kabyle peoples (Weininger, p.119). His work with the Kabyle peoples provided an ethnographic basis for Bourdieu and his text in the *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1992). It was during the 1990s that Bourdieu's prominence increased exponentially as he became a very visible participant in political struggles against the “neoliberal orthodoxy” that was coming to dominate political discourse in Continental Europe (Weininger, p.119).

Bourdieu (1992) started with the concept and application of economic capital and developed from there, ideas of social, symbolic, and cultural capital alongside concepts of hiatus and symbolic violence. While his research was done working with the different social classes in France as well as the Kabyle peoples, his research has been used and cited throughout many different areas of sociology and social research especially in regards to relations of power throughout social life. In this thesis his ideas of cultural and social capital will be applied to the issues I analyzed through my review of literature focused on the perspectives of immigrant students as well as second-generation students face in the United States educational system. I argue that applying Bourdieu's cultural, social, and symbolic capital ideas to an analysis of what our immigrant students face each

and every day will be a lens to consider whether or not these students are able to access social/economic mobility or disenfranchised from the start?

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu's theory (1992) of cultural capital developed from his initial notions of class structure entails all of the occupational division of labor. For Bourdieu, the occupational division of labor forms a system, which implies that the various divisions are different from each other, yet also related to each other in terms of "theoretical meaningful factors" (Weininger, 2005, p.125). It is these factors that develop from the distribution of capital. Bourdieu (2007) states:

Capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible. (p.83)

For Bourdieu cultural capital signifies an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills and power acquired and inherited by the privileged groups of society (Yosso, p. 174). So cultural capital can in theory be accumulated, but power and cultural capital tends to reside with the same group. Bourdieu argued that education helps keep cultural capital situated in the dominant class. He wrote:

The educational system helps to provide the dominant class with what Max Weber terms 'a theodicy of its own privilege', not so much through the ideologies it produces or inculcates (as those who speak of "ideological apparatuses" would have it); but rather through the practical justification of the established order which it achieves by using the overt connection between qualifications and jobs as a smokescreen for the connection – which it records surreptitiously, under cover of formal equality – between the qualifications people obtain and the cultural capital they have inherited – in other words, through the legitimacy it confers on the transmission of this form of heritage. (1992, p. 188)

Bourdieu posited that cultural capital – being things like education and language – could be gained or acquired through one of two ways – family and formal education. It is through the acquiring of cultural capital that one can have social mobility or the possibility to have the social mobility.

For Bourdieu, cultural capital can exist in three forms: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. The embodied state comes in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body. This type of cultural capital can only be gained through self-improvement, work that is done on one-self (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 85). For example, through education one makes self-improvement to the mind through education. This capital is not handed down from families. The objectified state comes in the form of cultural goods such as pictures, books, paintings, instruments, machines, etc. This form of cultural capital is transmissible in its materiality (p.87). Therefore, cultural goods can be appropriated both materially and symbolically, both processes presupposing economic cultural capital. Finally institutionalized state refers to the instituting of power both through social relationships and institutions, e.g. religious, educational, and governmental. Specifically, in the field of education this means cultural capital can be in the form of academic qualifications through the commodification of credentials. For Bourdieu, institutionalized state has three elements that in turn are institutions and are controlled and powered by “high society” (p.88). The first is academic credentials that are acquired through the educational system. The second is the market place where a value his or her values/ideas align with high society. Subsequently, those ideas can be exchanged for capital. Social interactions constitute the third element – spaces that reflect the turning social capital into economic capital (p.88).

Over a year ago, when I first came across Bourdieu's work and his theory about cultural capital and how it can be gained either through family or education, I could not help but think about the many immigrant students I dealt with on a daily basis. I have heard so many stories about immigrant students who cannot seem to gain cultural capital even though they are spending the exact same number of years in education as others who are gaining cultural capital. This inequity got me thinking; does education really help one gain capital if he or she does not already have capital that is valued by high society?

Complicating Ideas of Cultural Capital

Yosso (2005) takes up Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital. She agreed with the ascription of power to the dominant classes and that through formal schooling targeted students historically achieve lower academic outcomes. Knowledge of the upper and middle classes are considered capital valuable in hierarchical societies. Yosso states,

If one is not born into a family whose knowledge is already deemed valuable, one can then access the knowledge of the middle and upper classes and the potential for social mobility through formal schooling. Bourdieu's theoretical insight about how a hierarchical society reproduces itself has often been interpreted as a way to explain why the academic and social outcomes of People of Color are significantly lower than the outcomes of whites. The assumption follows that the People of Color "lack" the social and cultural capital required for social mobility. (p. 168)

Yosso takes Bourdieu's theory to say that some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor. Using that interpretation of Bourdieu, she explained, White, middle-class culture as the standard, and by that standard all other "forms and expressions of 'culture' are judged in comparison to this 'norm'" (p. 174). With this, cultural capital is not just inherited or possessed by the middle class, but instead it refers to the collection of precise forms of knowledge, skills and abilities that are 'valued' by

the privileged groups. Yosso argues that there are forms of cultural capital that marginalized groups bring to the table, in ways traditional cultural theory (or the privileged groups) does not recognize or value as cultural capital.

Another issue that Yosso addresses is the idea of deficit thinking. Deficit thinking positions minority students and families (I am adding in immigrant students and families as well) as the ones at “fault” for the poor academic performances for two reasons: 1) students arrive without the “normative cultural” (p.173) knowledge of the dominant culture and skills and 2) families do not value or support the student’s education. Yosso argued that too often many schools function from a deficit perspective by structuring ways to save “disadvantaged” students whose race, class, and cultural background has left them “lacking” the necessary knowledge, social skills, abilities, and cultural capital (p.168). Schools take up efforts in an aim to fill up “supposedly passive students” (p.173) with forms of cultural knowledge “deemed” valuable by dominant society. Educators in turn then take up the role of teaching these students the cultural knowledge and skills they feel the students are lacking. Yet, as Yosso argued, history has taught us that the cultural capital is remaining with the dominant classes that a shift in the cultural capital is not occurring, even with systems committed to teaching cultural capital. So if one is not born into a family with cultural capital and formal education fails to bridge the gap in ways cultural capital may be exchanged by targeted individuals, can cultural capital really be gained?

Social Capital

Social capital can be described as networks of people and resources gained from the community. Peer and social interactions can provide emotional support to navigate

through society's institutions (Yosso, 2005, p.178). To Bourdieu (2007), social capital is the total of the actual and potential resources, which are linked to possessions of a network of "institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (membership to a group) and in turn provides members with the backing of the collectively owned capital (p. 88). It is through membership that they earn a 'credential' that entitles them to credit – in essence giving them social capital in a society.

According to Bourdieu (2007) social capital can also be attained by a common name, which could be the name of a family, a class or tribe, or a school name. Through having the common name associated with an individual, social capital is maintained and reinforced. The amount of social capital that is gained through association with a particular network depends on the size of said network. The size and relevance of the network comes from an agent as well as his or her connections made and maintained. The volume of other types of capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) of the connections and the agent also play into the size and relevance of the network. The existence of networks becomes then the product of an endless effort at institution and institution rites, which mark the important moments that produce and reproduce the useful relationships that can help secure material and symbolic profits, leading to symbolic capital. Through this network of relationships come investment strategies (both individually and collectively) that are aimed at either creating or reproducing social relationships that are usable in the short and long term. Once a member becomes a part of a group or network he/she is instituted as a custodian of the limits of the group, because with each new entry into the group the criteria for entry is at risk. Understanding this concept sheds light on to why many cultures view marriage as the business of the entire group, and not just the agents

directly concerned. Through the introduction of new members (whether it be through marriage or another way) into group (family, clan, school) the whole definition of the group is exposed to redefinition.

The reproduction of social capital assumes an “unceasing effort of sociability” (Bourdieu, 2007, p.90) as well as a continuous series of exchanges through which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed. Social capital that is accumulated from a relationship becomes of greater importance to the person with the lesser social capital. Through a relationship with a person of greater social capital, a person gains capital – mainly social, but also so to extent cultural and economic culture. Therefore, a person who inherits social capital (i.e. from a family with a great name) is sought after for his/her social capital and because he/she is well known. In turn he/she is worthy of being known.

Each group or network has its own institutionalized forms of delegation, which enable the group to concentrate the entirety of the social capital in the hands of a single agent or a small group of agents to “mandate this plenipotentiary” (p.90) and represent the group. For example, in the institution of family, the head of the family is the one recognized as the only person entitled to speak on behalf of the family in official circumstances. Moreover, the institutionalized delegation is required to defend the collective honor of the institution when the honor of the weakest members is threatened. Finally, the institutionalized delegation, which ensures the concentration of social capital, also may expel or ‘excommunicate’ (p. 90) embarrassing individuals from the group.

In Yosso’s (2005) critique and expansion of Bourdieu’s theory, she uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) to divide cultural wealth into at least six forms of capital:

aspirational capital, navigational capital, social capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, and resistant capital. For Yosso familial capital refers to “cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (p. 177). This form of cultural wealth for Yosso expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Familial capital is nurtured by an extended family that can include immediate family to friends who are considered part of the “familia.” From this, agents learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to the community and its resources. Yosso argued that this capital could be fostered through the family as well as through sports, school, religious gatherings and other social community settings. Her thoughts on familial capital take social capital one step further.

Aspirational capital, Yosso argued, is the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even when faced with barriers that are both real and perceived. This capital allows parents and children the dream of possibilities beyond their current circumstances often without means of attaining those goals. Linguistic capital comprises of the intellectual and social skills gained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. This capital values bilingual education and in turn emphasizes connections between “racialized cultural history and language” (p.177).

For Yosso, social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources. Navigational capital refers to the skills of operating through social institutions. Navigational capital acknowledges “individual agency within institutional constraints” (p.179). Finally, for Yosso, resistant capital is comprised of knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. This form of capital is grounded in resistance to subordination (p.179). These additions by Yosso are important

expansions to Bourdieu's (1992, 2007) original thoughts on capital as they show that there are other forms of capital that immigrant students often possess that are not always valued by the dominant classes.

Factors Affecting Immigrant Students

In the next six sections, I will address the issues I analyzed across the three ethnographies and four articles I studied using Bourdieu's and Yosso's work. First, I will introduce the challenge of learning the language of the country of settlement. Second, I will discuss the issue of social isolation that is often felt by immigrant students in the school system. Third, racism and racial stereotypes will be discussed. Fourth, the idea of caring brought up by both students and staff is analyzed. Fifth, I will analyze the role of teachers and how immigrant students recognize them. Finally, gender roles will be analyzed, along with how gender inequality is perceived by immigrant students.

Language – learning English

As one would expect, learning the English language was a major factor affecting immigrant students. Four of the seven researchers I engaged with wrote at length about what the immigrant students had to say regarding language. Here, I am going to highlight this issue through voices of the immigrant student. In Lee's (2005) ethnographical work, she found that language was a theme that came up various different times in a variety of ways through her observations and interviews with the Hmong students. One way language was talked about by immigrant students as in regards to their parents. The Hmong American students reported that the reason their parents only came into a school when requested by a teacher or administrator was often due to their parents' uncomfortable feelings with their limited English skills. Lee also found that language

skills came into play not only with the immigrant Hmong students, but also with the Americanized/second-generation students. For these second-generation students they were able to speak English fluently, but struggled with reading and writing the English language. Many of the teachers don't see the struggle with the academic language skills, due to the fluency in speaking English. Lee reported when speaking to the teachers of UHS, she found that many were confused as to why so many of the second-generation Hmong students were still struggling with the academic skills of English. For example, Jane Vue is one year behind in school as she failed her sophomore year. When she revealed this to Lee, she sarcastically added it was "the Hmong way" (p.74) to be at least one year behind. Per Lee, this confusion reveals a lack of understanding of how the ESL programs work as well as the acquisition of language (p. 76). She went on to discuss that many mainstream teachers assumed that Hmong American students who are still struggling belong back in ESL classes, yet these students speak more English than Hmong and do not belong in ESL (p.76-77).

Lawrence (2002) also noticed language acquisition as a common response in his interviews with students in an intensive English program. He found that when discussing ways to learn a language, students clearly identified which skills they considered most important. Some of the comments made by the students he interviewed indicated the various skills:

8. I think they have a lot of ways, like the formal and the informal. And the formal is to go at a school like CESL [Center for English as a Second Language] or kind. And the informal is sometime, you know, to talk to people, you know, in the cafeteria and restaurant. And for me the most important thing is to read a lot I think. One way to learn a language is to learn.
9. To learn a language, okay, for me many ways. But the first way is to speak with the people and we need to understand the grammar. It's very important. Know vocabulary, a lot of vocabulary. Writing really for me is important I like

multiskill. It's very interesting. Grammar and reading – reading give a lot of vocabulary for you. (p. 5)

Through these and other quotes, Lawrence found that the single most numerous responses to how to learn a language had to do with speaking. Lawrence found that with his students (who were of college age), they found that the importance of language acquisition came with speaking and therefore, many of the students came to the United States to learn English rather than to learn it in their perspective countries.

Olsen (1997) found in her work, that of the many endeavors and aspects of immigrant life, the aspect that received the most attention and controversy was language. Learning English has become an essential requirement for acceptance and participation in mainstream curriculum along with the English-dominant social world. Several of the immigrant students with whom Olsen worked made comments regarding the overwhelming experience of learning English. It was often described as a major issue in their lives. Huan, a Vietnamese student described the invisibility he felt for not being able to speak English:

I remember all the classmates make fun of me because I couldn't spoke English. I felt very upset because I didn't have no friends who can help me with my work, and it was very hard for me to understand the teacher. The teacher didn't see me. I felt I wasn't there at all. (p. 96)

The drive to learn English is apparent not only for communication, but also to not be excluded from peers and teachers. Shirley, a student from Taiwan commented on the importance of learning English for herself and her siblings to be able to communicate with others to help with the loneliness they felt. She felt learning English was problematic in that she had no American friends.

How can we learn English if no one speak it with us? No Americans speak with us? A friend would be best, but it is a puzzle. If we don't speak English you can't

have American friend. So how do we learn English? (p.96)

English becomes huge capital for these students as trying to fit into the world they are in, as well as to succeed in the school system they are in. If they cannot communicate or engage with other students, capital cannot be gained.

These students whose voices I have highlighted feel as though there is a language barrier between themselves and the rest of the school. While the term language barrier is a figurative term it helps to clearly identify how immigrant students were feeling in the schools as they try to succeed. The learning of a new language can be cumbersome, especially a language with as many exceptions to each rule as there are rules like the English language. While children and young men and women are quick to adapt and often learn the basics of the language (at least enough to communicate with peers and teachers), they still feel a separation between themselves, their peers and their teachers as they are learning the language (Olsen, 1997, p.95-101).

Even once the students can converse with their peers and teachers, they were often still at a disadvantage as they do not have a vocabulary adequate enough to understand the complex wording that are found on standardized testing. Just like the Hmong second-generation students, Lee highlighted, who were failing school, due to the lack of support and lack of opportunities to converse with English speakers. This tension reminded me of a friend of mine teaches math for a high school in MCS and has worked hard with her students to increase their scores on standardized tests. On one practice standardized math test given to her students there was a question asking the speed of an oar. Most of her students missed the question as they thought the vocabulary word oar was the person in the boat rather than the actual oar. The students missed the question,

not because they didn't know how to figure out the speed of an object, but rather because they did not know the vocabulary used to test the question. Unfortunately, what test evaluators would have seen was an absence of recognition by the student. It would have appeared that the student did not know the objective. That is how the results will be interpreted, not that the students did not know the vocabulary, which was important on a math test. How are these students who have not fully gained language skills expected to succeed in our society when they are faced with this type of language barrier.

Bourdieu (1992) addressed the power that lies in language and who has the power to officiate language in his book described earlier in this chapter. He stated:

Moreover, the constitutive power which is granted to ordinary language lies not in the language itself, but in the group which authorizes it and invests it with authority. Official language, particularly the system of concepts by means of which the members of a given group provide themselves with a representation of their social relations (e.g. the lineage model or the vocabulary of honour), sanctions and imposes what it states, tacitly laying down the dividing line between the thinkable and the unthinkable, thereby contributing towards the maintenance of the symbolic order from which it draws its authority. (p.21)

The actual words used are not what hold the power, but rather the group that gives meaning and officiates the language holds the power. Unfortunately, for immigrant students who come knowing one or more different languages, but who do not hold cultural capital and the power to name through the language of the dominant class in their country of settlement, they are placed at a disadvantage.

Having cultural capital means the power to give meaning to words. It is those in power (administrators, test writers, school boards, and ultimately politicians) who deem what is considered important through the words they use and through what they expect others to know and understand. Those with the power are the ones who dictate how knowledge is measured in education and with what tools knowledge is measured. As with

my example of the math problem using the word oar, language proves to be an everyday barrier for these immigrant students. These students do not have the power to name or decide how knowledge is measured, so they are measured in ways that continue to keep them at a disadvantage and unable to gain cultural capital that is valued by high society.

Yosso (2005) analyzed language as one of her forms of capital; she calls it linguistic capital. Yosso wrote that linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language. Yosso, who worked with Students of Color, felt that these students arrived at school with multiple language and communication skills. Most of these students have been engaged participants in storytelling tradition, which could include listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, and stories. Some of the skills these students gain from storytelling comprise skills such as “memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme” (Yosso, 2005, p. 177). I think Yosso’s idea of linguistic capital can easily be applied to the immigrant students. Often these students are leaned upon to translate for their parents in the school system, which would be a form of linguistic capital (p.177). Yet this linguistic capital is not viewed upon as having value in the school systems.

In Lawrence’s (2002) work, several of the students he interviewed mentioned the importance of speaking with people who spoke the language of the country of settlement when learning a new language. They believed this helped with vocabulary and grammar of a language. In Lee (2005) and Olsen’s (1997) work though we find that the immigrant students were on the outskirts of the school and were finding themselves associating with other immigrant students. How are these students supposed to improve their language

skills if they are not able to converse with U.S. students? Bourdieu felt that one of the ways to acquire cultural capital was through education. If something as important as language is not being acquired at schools, how can cultural capital be attained by these immigrant students?

I find Lee's (2005) ethnography to really trouble Bourdieu's (1992) theory that education is a way to acquire cultural capital. The school Lee worked in was considered to be a great academic school, which boasted of academic success. As mentioned earlier, this school was awarded, by the U.S. Department of Education, a "School of Excellence Award" (p.17). The students she interviewed and observed were Asians, which were often considered the model minority. Even with these things in place – a great school attended by a model minority – she still found that these students were not succeeding. Many of the immigrant students were retained by their teachers, while others left school to pursue their GED. The second-generation students could speak the language fluently, yet still were challenged by the standards and expectations that demanded academic vocabulary and complex language skills. I argue these students were not gaining cultural capital through education.

A related point I would like to make regarding the failed exchange of social capital for the Hmong students at University High School is the use of a common name. Bourdieu (2007) argued that social capital could be gained through a common name, what most clearly comes to mind with a common name is a family name. Social capital from a common name can also come through things such as a club, tribe, or school name. If attending a certain school and stating one graduated from that school brings about social capital, then the Hmong students should have in theory more cultural capital.

University Heights High School had been awarded the “School of Excellence Award” which is a nationwide academic award, yet that social capital that comes with a name was not exchanged in the same way with the Hmong students at UHS as it was with White, English-speaking students.

Social Isolation

Many of the immigrant students in Lee (2005), Cohen (2012) and Olsen (2005), talked about feelings of isolation they felt in the schools when it came to interacting with American students. In Lee’s (2005) work, she wrote about how social isolation was one of the issues the traditional students who were in ESL classes dealt with in the school system. Traditional students primarily socialized with students from the ESL program. Lee noticed through her observations that the traditional students appeared for the most part to be invisible to the larger school population. The traditional students expressed this invisibility when they wanted to get to know “American” students, but felt “American” students were uninterested in getting to know them. Zoua, a traditional student, declared, “It is frustrating that Americans don’t want to be friends” (p.61). Zoua went on to say that she felt that one of the reasons she believed it was difficult to assimilate was due to English language limitations. Traditional students at UHS continued to hold on to hope that English language fluency will grant them full incorporation into American society. Some of the traditional students were starting to suspect that being in ESL carried a social stigma that might be limiting their opportunities to befriend Americans. Interestingly though, the traditional students only seemed to recount being ignored by White students. They did not seem to be concerned about the ‘social distance’ (p.68) between themselves and African American students. Sia, a second-generation immigrant graduate of the class

of 1999, described interactions with Whites:

For me, I feel, I just feel like some White people neglect me. I mean as much as I try to be nice to them, give them respect, they don't give it back to me. Why should I even bother with them? (p.68)

Sia felt that only other Asian students could understand where she was coming from due to the fact that she was different. Traditional students tended to respond to this social isolation by redirecting their focus to the positive aspects of life in the United States, while Americanized students noticed it as racism and discrimination.

In Cohen's (2012) work, he found that from his interviews one of the major themes that emerged was that the ESL classroom provided a comfortable learning environment for ESL students, but at the same time they felt that the ESL program did not meet their expectations for future careers. Students felt that they were being held back and that were not able to gain the education they thought mainstream education would provide for them. While the young women he interviewed spoke of how great the mainstream education was, they in fact were not part of mainstream education other than classes such as physical education. They were isolated from the rest of the school population as the majority of their classes occurred in the ESL program, which did not allow them to interact with the American students.

When Olsen (1997) had students create a school map of where students grouped themselves throughout the school, she found that newcomers were shown at the edges of the campus. The newcomers were literally at the margins of Madison High School as they were trying to fit into American life. Many of the students felt that "being American" was impossible for them, as they could not fit in. Nadira, a recent immigrant from Afghanistan commented on the challenges:

The rest are not real Americans. But the immigrants most of us wish to be American and try. And they become more and more like Americans. And they want to hang out with kids who are more American. But you can never really get there. We can speak English; we can wear the clothes. But we aren't the right religion; we aren't the same. You can't really get there. (p. 43)

Other students alluded to the social isolation they experienced as they discussed how they would sit and watch the American students. They didn't discuss interactions with the Americans, but rather they positioned themselves as the outsiders looking in.

Bourdieu's (1992, 2007) ideas of social capital can be used to see how much social capital these students don't actually have. If social capital is attained through relationships and access to resources, then these students have very little, if any, social capital. Many of the immigrant students represented in the literature review felt social isolation for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons that the immigrant students experience social isolation were due to the language barrier and the fact that often the ESL classes they attended were located physically in the outskirts of the schools. Social capital cannot very well be exchanged or gained if these students aren't able to interact and converse with American students. It seems that often the interactions these students have were with other ESL students and students of the same culture, therein not increasing their social capital.

As described in length above in relations to language, these students were unable to gain in social capital due to the fact that they were not having regular conversations with American students (Olsen, 1997). As seen with the Filipino students in Teranishi's (2002) work they also have limited contact with resources that would aid to them get into college – resources such as a college counseling center or teachers who were willing to give specific advice about college. With social capital encompassing not only

relationships, but also resources gained through exchange from these relationships and the community, the absence of infrastructure and support is another way that these students cannot access social capital. Literally, the Filipino students do not have access to these resources, putting them at a disadvantage to gain social capital.

Racism/Racializing

As Lee (2008), Teranishi (2002), Lee (2005), and Valenzuela (1999) interviewed and interacted with immigrant students, numerous times students expressed feelings of how they had been the bunt of racism. In Lee's (2008) work, she found the University's program with which she worked was unique in their approach to pedagogy, in that their pedagogy has been influenced by critical theory and cultural studies. Even with this pedagogy, students still discussed ways they felt raced and essentialized by their teachers. In an interview with a student named Sara, Lee questioned what kinds of identities were available to Asian students at the University.

Sara: I remember that the instructor gave us some pictures that shows about China, my home country, my home country, and it's about some AIDS village. The people living in that village always got AIDS and they showed some pictures. They never...they wear nothing. And bone by skin.

Ena: Skin and bones. Okay.

Sara: And it's awful. I feel embarrassed when I saw this picture. Maybe it's true but I think it's kind of some bias here and when they show some dirty and miserable things, they show our home country but they never show such kinds of pictures in Canada or any other western country. I think that it's unfair. And they also show other awful pictures in other Asian countries such as Filipino or something or whatever. They never show some such kind of picture in a western country. So I can't express the feeling but I feel uncomfortable. (Lee, p. 102)

I argue that in this interview, it can be seen that subjects of social and political critique appeared to be the Othered and presented in one-dimensional ways. Even if the instructor had intended to foster critical engagement through addressing global issues, Sara

perceived the instructor's approach as discriminatory.

In Teranishi's (2002) work with Filipino and Chinese American students, she found that students from both ethnic groups described "overt and covert forms of racial stereotypes that they experienced at school" (p. 148). The Chinese American students she interviewed reported they felt as though they were treated as the model minority, which meant teachers placed high academic expectations on them. One Chinese student explained how the perception of Asian Americans as high achievers would lead to other students taking advantage of them in class:

People think Asians are all smart. Yeah, they expect more. I experience this at school, especially when I'm working in groups. They expect me to do more stuff. If I'm in a group of people I don't know, they expect me to do more since they know I'm smarter. The students expect more out of me. Sometimes, it seems like they are taking advantage of me. (p. 150)

In contrast the Filipino students reported experiencing a lot of negative stereotypes from teachers and other students making them feel as they were viewed as delinquents and failures. Filipino students felt negative stereotypes came not only from teachers, but also from their peers. One student talked about this during her interview:

If anything happens at school, automatically they think it's our fault. At this school, they think all of the troublemakers are Asians, Filipinos. I guess they look at the students differently, you know what I'm saying? The Asians are just little hoodlums or something. (p.150)

Teranishi found that many of the students she interviewed received contradictory messages due to their race and ethnicity, which made it difficult for them to create a positive self-image of their racial and ethnic identities. Even though both Chinese and Filipino students are technically considered Asian, their experiences in schools were very different from each other showing that racial climates can vary greatly for different ethnic or immigration backgrounds.

Lee (2005) noticed that there was a difference between traditional students and second generation when it came to how they viewed racism. Traditional students assumed that the social distance between themselves and Whites came from language differences, while the Americanized students saw the same social distance and pointed to issues of racism and discrimination. Several of the students that Lee interviewed felt that the Hmong students were up against very negative stereotypes others had of them. Rita, a South Asian American student explained that many non-Asians stereotype Hmong students in blatantly negative ways:

Like the stereotypes that people have are like a lot of the Hmong – the Hmong stereotype is that they’re all gangsters and they follow, like, the “black path” of wearing baggy clothes and being cool and forming gangs and not coming to school, and being truant, you know, all the time. (p.47)

Another student, who was an Americanized female, through her comment showed how second-generation students were more cynical about life in the US due to racism:

Sometimes we always have fun if we go to the store. And I am like getting off of the subject, but sometimes when you go to the store and we just dress like we do – wear baggy pants and stuff and people are like looking at us like we are going to steal something. So we kind of make fun of that. We tend to act suspicious. We make the salesperson really nervous. We always go in the changing room to make us look suspicious. It is really funny. I do that sometimes, ‘cause I get really pissed when they look at us like that, but I don’t steal. (p.66)

These two students along with others noted “White people were the ones most likely to stereotype them as welfare recipients and gangsters” (p.66). With African Americans also stereotyped in these ways, it “suggests how closely Hmong Americans are positioned to African Americans in the racial hierarchy” (p.66).

Valenzuela (1999) discussed a young lady by the name of Carla who also experienced racism from her track coaches. Her grandmother was raising Carla, along with her younger brother, as her mother abandoned them, which caused a stressful family

life. With her background, Carla was an unlikely candidate for school success, yet she was well connected in the school. Carla participated not only in honor classes, but also as a member of the track team. Valenzuela documented that her coaches feared that due to her recent friendships with “gangster-looking” (p.82) types at school and her change to gang-like attire could jeopardize her chances of success. Carla explained that she dressed this way to “fit-in” (p.83) in her neighborhood, as it is best for her to not stand out in her neighborhood.

Due to these stereotypes, teachers and administrators positioned Hmong students and Carla at risk. Hmong students were framed by teachers, administrators, and other students as culturally deficient. Many of the staff at UHS believed that the Hmong students were falling into negative patterns due to living in poverty, and consequently, advanced the “cultural deficit perspective” (Lee, 2005, p. 46) in their teaching. According to Lee, cultural deficiency served to preserve the normative nature of whiteness and maintains the racial hierarchy. The Hmong students then internalized the message that Whites are the only “real” Americans, so they started to also see other Hmong students as culturally deficient.

With racism, we see that again there is racial hierarchy and those at the bottom of the hierarchy are not in possession of cultural and social capital. The stereotypes that are being placed upon these students foreclose potential opportunities for them to gain cultural capital. Bourdieu (2007) and Yosso (2005) argue that gaining cultural capital means a student is able to gain status in society and, therefore, have the opportunity to be a part of the dominant classes. These educators not only fail to help these students navigate the often hostile institution of public education but also abandon their own

responsibility in their struggle toward success. Using an individual-centered critique, i.e. personal deficit, they blame those targeted for their own lack of success.

Lee (2005) found this to be the case with the Hmong students who began to internalize feelings that they were culturally deficient due to hearing it and experiencing it over and over again from their teachers as well as their peers. I believe that her work illustrates racial domination. Many of the Hmong students were likened to African Americans in the racial hierarchy and therefore, as Lee argued, were ideologically blackened. Even though these students were Asians, they were not seen as model minorities or likened to Whites as the Chinese were from Teranishi's work. The Hmong experiences aligned with the experiences of the Filipino students from Teranishi's work in that both of these groups felt they were fighting against negative stereotypes aimed at their racial groups.

"Caring"

Two words that seemed to come up on a regular basis in interviews conducted with immigrant students, were the terms 'caring' and 'respect.' These words can be seen in Lawrence (2002) and Valenzuela's (1999) research. In Lawrence's (2002) work, he noticed that one of the sides of respect that students expect from their teachers has to do with a teacher's appreciation for the students' diverse cultures. One of the students in his study commented,

First of all, I think you have to learn about your different customs for people in the world, around the world. And second, it is very important that you have to understand that you are teaching to the class. They don't want to know how much do you know. "I'm a doctor; I have a master" – we don't care about it. We come here to learn; we don't care if you know more than someone else. (p. 8)

Another student talked about respect from a teacher being critical, stating: "If we have a

teacher that he doesn't respect, we can't feel good in class and maybe we wouldn't ask him or her" (p.8). These comments imply that being cared for and respected by the instructors were key to immigrant students.

Another example of caring in Lawrence (2002) comes in a conversation with a student where he feels cared for, he is willing to engage and interact with the student. The student stated:

If you feel this man....respects you, you can have contact with him, you can share with him. I like that. But if you feel he does not respect you from inside, you will hate this man. So you cut all the connections that lie between you and him. (p.7)

The above comment really demonstrates that feeling respected are huge and very important to the immigrant students.

Valenzuela (1999) noticed during her time at Seguin High school that the term caring came up multiple times from both students and teachers; however, there were competing definitions for the term. Teachers wanted the students to care about the school, while the students framed caring about school as something that was based on whether or not they believed the teachers demonstrated respectful, caring relations – the students' caring was contingent on the teachers' caring. In chapter two, the walkout that occurred at Seguin was represented. Students organized a walkout from the school to get the attention of teachers and administrators as they felt they were not having their needs met. As one freshman male student who took place in the walkout described the walkout as being about caring. He stated:

The walkout was about caring. We cared for our education though the teachers and administration didn't care for us. Even if they said they cared, talk is cheap. If it wasn't their fault the school was in trouble – and they'll tell you that, clean their hands – it was their responsibility no matter what. Todos, toditos [All, all], they were all to blame. (p. 60)

Many of the immigrant students at Sequin commented on how they felt that the school did not care about them. Elvia, a young woman, who was a Mexican immigrant, had a conversation with Valenzuela about why she was truant. She talked about the lack of care at school and her desire to leave school and get her GED. She stated:

It's like all of our teachers have given up and they don't want to teach us no more. In on class, I had a sub [substitute teacher] for all the time I was there, for four weeks! And he can't teach us nothing because he don't know math. The dude tried but that wasn't good enough, man! God, it kills me to give that man even just a little bit of my time. If the school doesn't care about my learning, why should I care? Answer me that. Just answer me that! A friend of mine dropped out of school, took her GED, and went on to college. I tell my Mom that's what I want to do, but it's like she don't get it. (p. 88)

The above comment shows that even though Elvia felt the school didn't care about her, and that she didn't care about staying in school, she did care about getting an education. As she shared with Valenzuela, she just wanted to take a different route to get there.

For another example of caring, let's look at the story of Laura. Laura came to school one day wearing a T-shirt with the message written on it, "Give Peace a Chance" paired with baggy pants that stopped above her ankles, which displayed white socks and shiny, black leather combat boots. When she was asked by the assistant principal to go home and change her clothes, she exploded. The following excerpt comes from Valenzuela's field notes from that day:

As I sat waiting to speak to the assistant principal, a young woman with white makeup walks in scream, "What! Are you crazy? What does what I wear have to do with anything? I live alone. I work for my money. And not even my parents tell me what to do or wear. And you're telling me that what I've got on isn't good enough? I don't bother anyone when I go to class. I go to class to learn! School should be about me learning and not about what I wear! This is bullshit!" The assistant principal smiled condescendingly, telling her "Now, now, Laura..." and coaxed her into her office where her tirade could not be witnessed by others, including myself. She entered her office, where she continued screaming. She then threw the door open and stomped out of the office all red in the face. Her

second outburst, the assistant principal later informs me, landed her with a one-day, on campus, suspension from school. (p.80)

A few weeks later, Valenzuela encountered Laura at a convenience store several blocks from school where she worked. Even though school counselors knew Laura had to work to support herself, they refused to allow her to enroll in Cooperative Education, which enabled youth to work for credit off campus for half a day. The school counselors based their denials on the fact that Laura had not taken certain prerequisite classes. “‘So what happens?’ Laura asked, rhetorically. ‘I’m being counted absent every day from three classes to set me up so I’ll flunk this semester. They don’t even have to say, ‘Laura, you’re worthless. You should flunk.’ All they have to say is, ‘We have rules’” (p.80). Her conflict with school staff shows the competing definitions of caring.

Through conversations with various students, Valenzuela noticed that the look of “not caring” by students was actually a form of resistance. She uses the example of a senior male, Rodrigo, whose approach was a clear example of how students use “not caring” as a strategy of resistance. Rodrigo was a student capable of excelling in honors’ classes, but he chose to remain in the regular curriculum to which he had been automatically assigned after transferring to Seguin from a magnet school in another part of the city. Aside from being an avid reader, Rodrigo also had been writing poetry and prose for much of his young life. Per Valenzuela, Rodrigo’s breadth of knowledge of Chicana and Chicano literature that could rival the knowledge of any college graduate specializing in this field. When she first met Rodrigo, he was involved in preparations to teach a multicultural literature class after school to at least ten students who had expressed interest. Even though he had received the principal’s permission, the class did not come to fruition, because the principal was unable to find necessary funds to cover

the text Rodrigo wanted to use. When Rodrigo came across teachers who had not met him before, they wondered from where such a remarkable young man had come. Rodrigo was insulted by the implications made that dark-skinned Mexicans could not be either gifted or as accomplished as he. He stated:

They have this image of kids that we are just messed up in the head. That's not really true because many students here – I think their intellectual ability is just too high for them to be in regular classes, but they don't enter honors classes. There are people out there who just think that we are into sex and drugs. That's not true. I can't say that I'm just one exception because there are many exceptions. At this school, there are many students, but some teachers at this school...I'll start staying this because it's true. Certain teachers say, "No, let's not read this. This is too hard for these kids. No, let's not read John Keats. No, Shakespeare's Hamlet. Let's not read it, but let's watch the film." That's something that I see, always some other kind of source that they turn to that is some kind of a secondary source, something that is not on level, but a little bit more basic. (p.98)

Rodrigo added that if it were not for his commitment to self-education, he would have never realized how “wrong-headedly schools approach their mandate to educate” (p.98). Rodrigo felt that it was his independent-mindedness that made school tolerable and what kept him from dropping out. Rodrigo's words and experiences summarized students' experiences of alienation from uncaring bureaucracies.

This is where I argue that Bourdieu's theories (1992, 2007) are not able to fully encompass all the capital that can be attained. Here, Rodrigo has many talents and capital that could be described under Yosso's (2005) resistant capital. Rodrigo was obviously resisting the education system. He was gaining capital through his own means and time. The school though was not valuing his capital, as it was not the capital it deemed valuable.

Another aspect of caring that Valenzuela documented was that the teachers that students felt were great teachers and cared about, were those teachers who established

relationships with the students and made them feel cared for. One of the comments about a teacher that illustrates this point comes from a second-generation, ninth-grade female student:

Ms. Aranda is the best teacher I ever had. I never got bored in her class. And I learned so much. I came to respect her even more after she helped out this friend. She wanted to drop out of school and missed a lot of homework and tests. Other teachers flunked her but Ms. Aranda helped her catch up. If something like that came up with me, I know I could go to her with it (p.101-102).

This comment showed that by a teacher demonstrating a caring attitude toward students, the students in turn offered respect to the teacher. Valenzuela found compelling evidence that students did actually care about education despite their rejection of school. Ironically, she found that even those students who skip classes chronically regularly attended classes that were meaningful to them. Often it was a class with a teacher who had established rapport with the student.

When looking strictly at Bourdieu's (1992, 2007) thoughts and theories on social and cultural capital, I don't think care is explicitly reflected in his theories. However, if we return to Yosso's (2005) critique and expansion of his work, one might argue that the concepts of aspirational and navigational capital are affected by caring. As you recall, aspirational capital is the ability to preserve hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (p.176). Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions (p.178). Yosso believed familial, peer, and social interactions could provide emotional support to navigate through society's institutions. She addressed the challenges of predominantly white institutions in higher education and educational settings in her general work. I would argue that experiencing care alongside the cultivation of aspirational and navigational capital would help immigrant students

negotiate racially hostile (or ethnically hostile or culturally hostile) institutions. I would argue though that even though “caring” is not part of Bourdieu’s conceptualization of social capital, Yosso invites us to consider the way capital works in new ways. Her work speaks directly to the navigation immigrant students faced at the intersections of family, school, and teacher-student relationships, or rather the lack thereof. Here, I argue that care does add to capital. While it not valued by “high society,” (Bourdieu, 2007) according to Yosso’s ideas and Valenzuela’s evidence, care from teachers and family does help immigrant students maneuver the institution of school. When these students feel that teachers care for them, they feel valued and shared that they were more likely to stay in school (Valenzuela, 1999).

Role of Teacher – bad versus good

Along with immigrant students’ desires to see respect and caring from teachers, the classroom environment and student-teacher relationships become important issues too. Often the two seem to go hand and hand. In Lawrence’s (2002) work, he found that students he interviewed were quick to answer the question on what makes a good teacher. Comments ranged in what each student found to be important in the makings of a good teacher. Here are a couple of the comments from interviews Lawrence conducted:

A good teacher needs to prepare his class.

I think you have to usually talk with your students and to understand what they want to learn. Yeah, why they want is very important.

I think he’s one of the most effective men I have ever met because he gives a motive. The students speak more. And he’s also kind of strict. (p. 14)

Lawrence found that the descriptive adjectives students used to describe “good” teachers were terms such as, “‘active,’ ‘challenging,’ ‘clear,’ ‘encouraging,’ ‘energetic,’

‘passionate,’ and ‘patient’” (p.13). These words show how much the students want the teachers to engage with them and show them through their teaching that they care about the students.

As discussed in the above section of ‘caring,’ Valenzuela (1999) wrote at length that what made a good teacher in the eyes of the students was a teacher whom the students believed cared. When students were asked who were the best teacher and why, they often responded with comments about teachers who took time to get to know them and work with them therein showing the students they cared about them. A second-generation male student commented about his opinion on what made Ms. Novak a great teacher:

What makes Ms. Novak a great teacher is that she’s organized and laid-back at the same time. Everything looked too pretty, too stiff when I first walked in her room. But now I see that she’s just doing everything she can to make sure that we learn and that we’re happy about learning, too. Even when I’m sick, I still come to school to be in her class because she makes you feel nice, you know, like you’re wanted or something. (Valenzuela, p. 101)

As mentioned in the above quote, Valenzuela noticed that some of the most compelling evidence that students do care about education despite their rejection of schooling is their attendance of a class they liked. She found that students who had great truancy problems in most classes, they regularly attended a class that was meaningful to them. Often these meaningful classes were with a teacher who cared about them and made them feel wanted in class.

Valenzuela also noticed that many of the students with whom she worked had a dual frame of reference. Many felt that their former teachers had been much more invested in them in Mexico. Some of the students commented on how much teachers in Mexico cared about them and made a point to get to know them both in and outside of

school. Linda, a young Mexican immigrant woman, complained that Seguín teachers hardly know their students. She criticized them saying, “I don’t expect them to visit me, just to know me a little bit. They’re always too busy, or if you’re like me and like to read, they leave you alone even more (p.131). Valenzuela argued that when students who had a dual frame of reference in regards to education and compared caring relations of teachers both here in the United States and in Mexico, the immigrant students’ critiques made sense and held value.

Lee (2005) also brought up the role of teachers and the affect they could have on impressionable students who were so desperately trying to fit in. Per Lee’s field notes, Sia was left visibly upset after an experience that left her silenced in a class:

Sia was very upset today about what happened in her social studies class. Apparently, the teacher had asked students to debate the issue of low-income housing. Sia said that she was the only person in the class to support low-income housing and that she felt all alone in her efforts to talk about why it is good to have low-income housing. She said that most of the students in her class are White. She complained bitterly that many of the students in the class said “stupid things about how people shouldn’t just get stuff for free.” I asked Sia whether the teacher tried to balance the debate by giving the other side and she said, “No! She just stood there and smiled.” I wish I had been in class. (p.78)

Sia was a student who had lived in low-income housing, so this class debate was more than just academic to her. She understood in that moment that the teacher and the students were passing judgment on people like her. This experience once again told Sia that she was not valued at the school. Here Yosso (2005) would classify this under her idea of navigational capital in that students have to be able to navigate through institutions, sometimes with no help. We can see that Sia had to navigate through that class, and the teacher did not offer any help to her.

Teranishi’s (2002) work also documents the importance of teachers. Teranishi

argued that the Chinese and Filipino students had very different racial climates in their schools. One Chinese student reported, “My AP teachers have helped me in my college planning. They’re the ones that care the most about students. They actually want to help, whereas other teachers don’t really care” (p.149). The Filipino students did not have access to teachers that were willing to help them prepare for school.

As stated earlier, Bourdieu (1992, 2007) argued that the two ways to gain cultural capital was through family or through education. Yosso (2005) in turn troubles this idea, by stating that cultural capital ultimately remains with the dominant class. Even though targeted students, which includes immigrant students, particularly non-English speaking immigrant students raced non-white are navigating formal schooling, yet still face inequitable resources and therefore, yield some of the lowest academic outcomes. For Bourdieu, capital remains with the dominant class as they have other ways to access capital through their family. Immigrant students, and other targeted students, do not come in with cultural capital given to them by their family, so should be able to access it through education, but yet education is not giving them capital.

Yosso (2005) takes up the idea of how teachers and administrators are influenced by their deficit thinking. For example, teachers work to teach the necessary knowledge needed that these students are missing (p.168). In Lee’s (2005) work she takes a similar idea in what she calls the “cultural deficit perspective” (p.46). With this deficit thinking, teachers feel they improving their students’ cultural capital by teaching the students the cultural knowledge and skills they feel the students are lacking. Yet, I would argue history is teaching us that cultural capital is continuing to remain with the dominant class and that even a shift is occurring in the status of cultural capital in institutions of formal

education. So if one is not born into a family with cultural capital and teachers are not aiding targeted students in the formal education process to bridge the gap to cultural capital, can cultural capital really be gained?

While perhaps we are not seeing immigrant students gain cultural capital through formal education, I do think that these teachers that the students think are the best, are helping add to the students' social capital. Bourdieu's theory (1992, 2007) on social capital does describe the relationships and resources one gains from the community. If these individual teachers are showing the students that they are valued, then students make an effort to go to school and make these academic and social connections (Lawrence, 2002 and Valenzuela, 1999). As stated above, if these students feel 'cared' for, they will add to this relationship with a specific teacher, and perhaps this will be extend to other teachers and other community members.

Through my personal experiences, as well as through the literature review I completed, I continue to feel that our educational systems are not helping these immigrant students gain cultural capital. With that being said, these specific teachers (Lawrence, 2002 and Valenzuela, 1999) who obviously do make an impact on some students are in their own small ways creating resistance in the education system, helping the students gain social capital. While they may not be gaining cultural capital, as defined by Bourdieu (2007), there is value in each teacher that takes the time to make an impact on a student!

Gender Roles

Gender role differentiation was something that was addressed at length in all three of the ethnographies. With the works of Valenzuela (1999) and Olsen (1997), gender

inequality was mentioned and discussed but solely through the perspective of the young immigrant females. Both of these researchers had the majority of their interviews with young immigrant females. Lee (2005) did interview both young male and female immigrant students. While gender inequality was brought up in interviews with young males, she found they did not experience or believe that there was gender inequality.

Valenzuela (1999) found in her ethnography that females often exhibit a clear pattern of offering academic-related support to their male friends and boyfriends. While she found this pattern to be evident cross-generationally, she never found it to be the case in the opposite direction in which a male would take responsibility for a female's schoolwork. When Valenzuela was interviewing the girls as to why they were doing the schoolwork for their boyfriends, various reasons were given such as their boyfriends worked long hours and didn't have time to do their homework. She found that these females were spending time doing their boyfriend's schoolwork often at the sacrifice of their own schoolwork.

One student, Norma, admitted to spending more time on her boyfriend's homework than her own and, consequently, her schoolwork had begun to suffer. Norma claimed that "helping Chach helps him to feel good about himself – you know, getting a good grade now and then." After every good grade, Chach would take Norma out for a nice evening on the town (p.145). This is just one of several examples of where girls are making compromises to secure the love and affection of a male. When Valenzuela asked about how this was taking away from their own schoolwork, one young woman responded, "I make Bs and Cs. Not bad if you ask me. As long as I'm not failing, they don't notice anything" (p.145). The "they" in that statement was the young woman's

parents. With the fact that Valenzuela never found young men willing to sacrifice their schoolwork for a young woman shows that gender inequality was taking place in Seguin with these students' relationships and their boyfriends.

Lee (2005) noticed that Hmong experiences were gendered in nature. "Gender, as it intersects with race and class, informs and limits the experiences of Hmong American youth in their homes, communities, schools, and the larger society" (p. 87). Many of the Hmong young women complained about gender inequality in their families as well as the Hmong culture in general. Jean, an Americanized girl had a comment that summarized how the Hmong young women felt,

The Hmong culture believes that women are supposed to be this and that. I don't believe in that. If you're the woman, you have to do all this stuff. It's like giving you a job. And you don't even want to do it. It's like already setting your life for you. (p.87)

Jean along with other students at Seguin, they felt they had work both at home and school, which they didn't feel men experienced. Interestingly, Hmong young men did not report any concerns about gender inequality. They did view men and women's work as separate but equal. Danny, a young Hmong male, showed this view, "Both the guys and girls have to do things. The guys do the outside work, and the girls do the inside work. Like, the guys have to take out the trash." Lee found that the Hmong American youth at UHS were trying to negotiate various new ways of expressing and performing their gendered identities as they lived in two different cultures. Lee noticed that the young Hmong women regularly complained about gender inequality in their families and in Hmong culture. In contrast though, young Hmong men never reported concerns about gender inequalities.

Olsen (1997) noticed in her time at Madison High School that there was gender

inequality as told by the immigrant students, in particular the young immigrant women. Part of reason for this is due to the fact that many of the families in Bayview could make it economically without the mother as well as the father working outside the home. Frequently, though even with both parents working, in order for the family unit to make it, they needed to depend on the children for part of the support. These families expected their adolescent girls either to care for the younger siblings or go to work themselves to contribute to the economic support of the family. Often the older siblings would sacrifice for their younger siblings and give up their “American” dreams. Guadalupe, a young Mexican immigrant woman with a mother and three brothers, explained:

We came because my mother wanted us to have a good education and to have chances. I wanted to be a teacher, and I dreamed I would go to school and go to college and return to my village and be a teacher. That was the dream. That was my American dream. But it is hard here. My mother works so hard, and I work, too. I am so tired from working that I stopped going to school. It has to be that way now. My little brothers are smart and they still go to school. I will not graduate, but they will. (p. 129)

For many of the immigrant girls, the hopes for their own futures are set aside as their families demanded their time, energy, and focus. They deferred their dreams to their younger siblings or to the next generation. Sadly, within a few short years, many of the young immigrant girls accepted that it would be their siblings or children who will achieve the American dreams.

The gender inequality that young immigrant women felt is just one more way that they struggle to gain both social and cultural capital. These women are trying to juggle the demands of school, which is the way to gain cultural capital per Bourdieu, along with the demands of their families and their cultures. These young women felt that they had to spend so much time at home working, that they were not able to focus as much time on

school which would gain them cultural capital. I think it can be argued that when it comes to gaining social and cultural capital, the young immigrant men have the advantage when compared to the young immigrant women. Many of the cultures represented by Olsen (1997), Valenzuela (1999) and Lee (2005) shows that it was more important to the perspective cultures to advance their men. The young women also help with this, whether that was due to their cultures or a decision that was individually made. As the students mentioned, it is the young women that are expected to take over work in the homes such as taking care of younger siblings or keeping the home in running order. This allowed the young men to be able to spend more time in school, whether it was that they can focus more on schoolwork or that they were able to stay in school for more years. Also as was shown by the students in Valenzuela's (1999) ethnography, the young women also were willing to give up on their schoolwork, to help the males in their lives advance further. Bourdieu and Yosso might argue that cultural and familial expectations foreclose access to social and cultural capital.

For Yosso, One of the six forms of cultural capital is aspirational capital. For her, aspirational capital is the ability to maintain 'hopes and dreams' or the future even when faced with real and perceived barriers. This resilience can be seen in those students who allowed themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances. I feel this can be capital that many of these young women actually have. Olsen found that many of the young immigrant women she interviewed were losing hope that they would not be the ones to achieve their dreams; they passed that onto their younger siblings. They still had hope that these dreams could be achieved even when it seemed a like a bleak hope.

I would argue that gender inequality that is evident in these ethnographies is just one more way these young immigrant women are unable to attain social capital. With their families and cultures often taking precedence over education, these young women are unable to access cultural capital.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

As I conducted my research on immigrant students from the voices of students, I learned so much. Before reading much of this research, I thought I had a decent understanding of what immigrant students dealt with from my years working in MCS with immigrant students and their families. After having read the various articles and the three ethnographies, I feel that I know so much more about how immigrant students truly view the public education system in the United States, and I argue that their voices need to be heard. Actions need to be taken to address what they are seeing and feeling as they navigate through the school systems.

As I spent time researching immigrant voices, I noticed that there was a lot of time and work spent listening to the voices of high school immigrants. While all three ethnographies were done in different parts of the United States and with different race and cultures of immigrant students, they were in fact all done in high schools. The journal articles were created with participants who were in high school or in college. Some of the participants in college did in fact talk about their time and experiences in elementary and high school, but it was shared in a sense of looking back on that time. I was unable to find research done with immigrant students who were in elementary school, which is where I initially wanted to spend time focusing on student experience. It is in an elementary school that I work currently and see immigrant students, but could not find research that took their voices into consideration. I realize that this population is hard to interview as they are so young and do not make the best participants, but I feel that their voices are extremely important. I think that those first few years in education, and often the first few years these immigrant students are in our public education system, are

crucial building blocks for these students as they try to understand a new culture. It is my future plan to conduct qualitative research with this population of immigrant students who are in elementary schools in the United States.

Along with the fact that there was little to no research conducted on children in elementary school, I noticed also that a lot of the research was done from the perspectives and voices of young women immigrants. Lee (2005) did have voices of young immigrant men, but the majority of the voices in all three ethnographies came from females. There are probably a variety of reasons as to why the research was much more heavily reliant upon females. My opinion on this is that all three ethnographers were females, which probably made it more comfortable for females to talk to the researchers. Also, many of the cultures that these participants came from are cultures where gender inequalities do exist. These men may not want to talk or feel like they can talk openly about these issues with a female. It would be interesting to see an ethnographic study done by a male. The articles that were used in this thesis with research done by males were done through interviews with participants. With the interviews they conducted, they did not spend the amount of time with participants that an ethnography would have spent.

Both Valenzuela (1999) and Lee (2005) spent time defining the differences between recent immigrants and those that were second-generation immigrants, but I feel that first- and second-generation research is still not adequate enough. It seems through the research reviewed that second-generation immigrants were expected to have already assimilated into the U.S. culture and therefore did not need as much attention and help from students. I think more research needs to represent the experiences of these second-generation immigrants who still faced struggles as they navigated through the school

system. Even with a fluency in English, the research in the ethnographies showed that second-generation immigrant students were lacking in academic English in particular with their reading and writing.

Implications

The research that has been reviewed and analyzed has great implications for people throughout the United States public educational system. Starting with ESL teachers who often are the first person in the education system who deal with the immigrant students. The students voices tell us what they find is helpful in their teachers. They want the teachers to show that they care about each student, as well as to create classrooms that feel comfortable. When these students feel like they are cared for and have value in the school system, they were more willing to come to school and be active. The research also showed that it can be just one teacher who made them feel cared for that can make all the difference. When often it is easy to think that administrators and central offices hold the power, this research showed that the caring attitude of just one teacher could make a difference.

While many of the students talked about their ESL teachers, they also talked about teachers who taught classes in the mainstream curriculum. As immigrant students start taking more classes in the mainstream curriculum, and as they no longer need ESL services, the mainstream teachers will be the ones that have the opportunity to make an impact on these students. Valenzuela's (1999) work in particular talks about the drop out rate of second-generation students due to not feeling like the school system is the way for them. I believe that mainstream teachers are critical. They have the chance to be able to play a very valuable role if they can communicate through their actions that they care

about the first- and second- generation students. If these teachers can become part of familial capital (Yosso, 2005) for these students, I believe students won't leave school.

Teranishi (2002) and Valenzuela (2005) showed that guidance counselors play a vital role with immigrant students. If guidance counselors can create a space where college is spoken about to all students, immigrant students and targeted students will feel they are valued in the school. Students like Rodrigo (Valenzuela, 1999) are tracked into the wrong curriculum, could experience more success in the public school system, if guidance counselors really take time with each student, rather than rely on stereotypes. Also, guidance counselors can make sure that college preparatory classes are available to all students, not just the White, American students.

For administrators, the voices of immigrant students are also important so that they can know how immigrant students navigate through their schools. To run a school, I feel that a successful administrator needs to be aware of all that is going on in his/her school and things that are affecting the students from the school. As the culture in the United States continues to change demographically, more and more schools will be more diverse and will have recent immigrant students and/or second-generation immigrant students. Administrators need to have trainings for all their teachers on what these students were saying was affecting them. With social isolation being a major factor in the students' voices, administrators need to help find ways to give immigrant students more opportunities to interact with mainstream students.

Lastly for policy writers, I think this research has valuable implications. Immigrant students are said that they felt socially isolated and felt racially stereotyped, which in some districts may stem from various policies that keep immigrant students

isolated from mainstream curriculum and U.S. students. Additionally, with the student voices saying that language was a huge factor in their navigation through the school system, I do not understand why it is that students are required to take standardized tests a year after they have immigrated to the United States. In my professional work I have witnessed immigrant students taking all standardized tests after a year of being here, even though they struggle with the language. Even with all tests, other than Language Arts, being read to ESL students, they still do not fully understand the words they are hearing, yet it is expected that they do well on these tests. Is our educational system setting them up to fail?

I still think that Bourdieu's theories (1992, 2007) on social and cultural capital are compelling theories, but I do not think that they are all inclusive. Yosso (2005) provides a great way of complicating the theories. Through her complications she is able to add to Bourdieu's theories in areas where these theories are weak or non-existent. Her various forms of capital really can help us understand areas that the immigrant students really do have capital, but unfortunately, the educational system does not always value the capital that these students bring with them.

I end this thesis with the thoughts that our public educational systems are setting our immigrant students up for failure, as too many do not come with social and cultural capital that "high society" in the U.S. values, and education is not giving them the tools to gain it. Hopefully, future research will help everyone from ESL teachers to policy makers improve on our public educational system and give these students the tools and capital they need to succeed in our society.

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